

THE NEW YEAR'S WISHES.

BY CARRIE SEYMOUR.

It was New Year's Eve, cold and windy. The gale blew fiercely around the corners of the streets, sweeping through crowded Broadway, howling up the narrow alleys, and causing each pedestrian to wrap his garments close around him.

In the library of a large mansion on Fifth Avenue, a gay group of girls was assembled. The room was furnished with all that wealth and taste could desire. Before the bright coal fire, which gave light and warmth at the same time, those gathered there little heeded the tempest without, but chatted merrily on, regardless of aught save themselves.

"And this is New Year's Eve," said Julia, the eldest, a tall, regal-looking girl. "I wonder where we shall be one year from to-night."

"Oh, girls, girls," said Susie, interrupting, "let each one tell what they most desire for the next year, and one year from to-night, let us meet here, and relate the fulfilment or disappointment of their wish."

"Agreed, agreed," cried they all.

"Julia, you are the oldest, you commence."

"I ask only for fame," replied Julia. "I would like to be a poetess; to have my poems admired by old and young; to hear my praises sung from every tongue."

"And would you be perfectly happy?" said one.

"Perfectly," said the enthusiastic girl.

"As for me," said Susie, "I ask only for love, and a happy home of my own," and as she spoke, a rosy blush suffused her cheeks.

"Well done, Susie," was the general cry, amid a burst of laughter, "you are sure to have your wish, if Fred Wharton has his way; we should be fortunate if there was as good a prospect of our success."

After a little more good-natured raillery, they called upon Ellen, a quiet, pleasant-looking girl.

"I would like," said she, "to do my duty to my fellow creatures; to teach the gospel to the poor heathen."

"Well, I have no such whimsical ideas of duty," said Lizzie. "I would like to roam the wide world o'er; to wander over the classic ground of Italy; to inhale the balmy air of *la belle France*; to traverse good, old England."

"And I," cried Anne, "desire wealth, unbounded wealth; and then I could have everything."

"Everything but happiness," said Alice, the last of the group.

"Oh! but I should be happy, if I had all the wealth I ask for," replied Anne. "But it is your turn now, Alice. What is your wish?"

"To fit myself for heaven," was her reply, in a gentle tone; and her large, spiritual-looking eyes glistened with tears.

A solemn silence fell upon the group, for they dearly loved the gentle girl, who, it was evident, was fast passing to that "bourne whence no traveller returns." The silence was broken in a few minutes by an elderly gentleman, who had entered unperceived.

"Well, girls," said he, "my wish is this, that I may be allowed the privilege of listening to the fulfilment of your wishes."

Surprise had kept the girls silent till he ceased, when exclamations broke from every lip at his presence. "Why, grandpa, how came you here? How long have you been here? You are too bad, to listen," &c.

"The grandsire smilingly replied, "I was commissioned to summon you to the drawing-room; the door was ajar, so I did not disturb you. Julia was just expressing her wish, and feeling an interest in you all, I remained silent. I hope you will forgive me, and grant my wish."

"We will," they replied, "and one year from to-night we will meet here again."

"If our lives are spared," said the old gentleman. "My dear girls," he continued, "I hope your wishes will all be granted; if they will add to your happiness. Alice's, I am sure will," and he imprinted a kiss upon the forehead of the lovely girl, "and if we all thought more of heaven than we do," he continued, "we should be far happier. But, come, Susie," he resumed, changing his tone, "if we do not go down soon, I am afraid your wish will not be granted. I dare say Fred has been pacing back and forth this long time, anxiously waiting your arrival. I fear I have incurred his displeasure, for he told me, as I left the room, to be as expeditious as possible; for he had not seen you for three days." And with a merry laugh at poor Susie's

expense, the party descended to the drawing-room.

A year later, as they had promised, the same group were again assembled in the library. Let us look in on them.

Time has wrought some change in their personal appearance, but a greater change in their hearts. They are not as light-hearted; their laugh rings less joyously; but there is still much happiness in their countenances. After chatting awhile, their grandpa said,

"Well, girls, you all know what we come here for; pray proceed, for I am impatient to hear you. Begin, Julia."

"My wish has been granted," said she. "This little book," and she laid her hand upon a small volume of poems which lay upon the table beside her, "is fast finding its way through the world. I hear my poems sung at the musical coteries of my friends. I hear them quoted by the most eminent speakers. Yes, indeed, my wish has been granted, and beyond my utmost expectations."

"And has all this brought you happiness?" said grandpa. "Have you never sighed for something higher and nobler than the applause of the multitude?"

"It has never," sighed Julia, "brought me one hour's happiness. It has gratified my ambition, indeed. But there is a void in my heart which their praises do not fill. Come, Susie," said she, and with a light laugh she endeavored to throw off the gloom which had settled upon her brow, "let us have your experience, though we all know your wish has been granted."

"It has, indeed," said Susie, who had borne the name of Wharton for a number of months. "This has been a happy year to me, and I have learned much. It has taught me that I must not live for myself alone; there is another whose happiness depends on me; and if I would keep the love I have won, I must conform to his wishes and habits, and endeavor to make his home pleasant. We have been very happy thus far, and it shall not be my fault if we do not continue so. God grant we may."

"That is right, my child, that is right," said the grandsire, "too many marriages that commence happily are marred by the wife's persisting in her own way in opposition to that of her husband. Not that I think the wife should always give up. No man who truly loves, and is governed by the right principle, would require it. There should be mutual concession. You are happy now, my dear child, and if you set up to your views, you will most assuredly continue

so. But come, Ellen it is now your turn." And he looked at her.

"I have not attained my wish," said she, "and it is best that I have not. The past year has made me wiser. I now see that I am unfitted for the station I desired. I lack the fortitude and patience necessary for the work; and my heart shrinks from the weight of responsibility it involves. Besides, I feel that there is greater cause to teach the heathen of our own city, the poor, ragged children that roam through the streets."

"You are right, Ellen," said grandfather. "The Pagans at our doors need the gospel. Go on in your good work."

"I have realized my wildest dreams," said Lizzie, in her turn, "I have seen Italy, Greece, France and England; and have been happy. Some time I will tell you all about it."

"It is your turn now, Annie," said grandpa, and he addressed a delicate-looking girl, dressed in deep mourning.

"My rash wish has also been granted," said Annie, "but at how great a sacrifice! The wealth I have obtained will not compensate for the loss of my dear parents. Oh! how gladly would I resign it all if it would return the dead to me." And she burst into tears.

"Your wish was thoughtless, not heartless," answered her grandsire, "and though, if you could have foreseen all, you would not have made it, it was not the consequences of your wish. There is a higher power that presides over our destiny, and He would not suffer a thoughtless desire to be the cause of so much sorrow to you. If you had the faith of our sweet Alice you would not think so."

Alice, who was also present, had changed much during the past year. Her whole appearance betokened the swift approach of death. Her eyes gleamed with an unnatural lustre, and her skin, which was of dazzling whiteness, was heightened by the hectic spot, which burned on either cheek. A few short weeks, days, or even hours, and her place would be vacant.

A pang shot through the hearts of the group, as they gazed upon her, and the tears coursed down their cheeks in silence.

"Why should you weep for me, dear cousins?" said Alice. "I am going home to my heavenly Father, no more to suffer or to sin. My wish has been granted me, and I can now, with sincerity say, 'Thy will, not mine be done.' But it has caused me many a heart-struggle to reconcile myself. After I realized that my days were numbered, I endeavored to turn my thoughts and desires away from earth and fix them on

holier things. The worst of all is to feel that I must leave my dear parents alone. May God comfort them! We shall probably never meet again on earth," she continued, "but, oh, I entreat you, obtain that peace of mind which passeth all understanding. It will make you happy through life, and comfort you on your dying bed."

She ceased, and the group, sadly and in silence, left the room.

A few short days, and Alice was laid in the silent tomb.

But her words, on New Year's Eve, were long remembered; and more than one of the group profited by them.

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MARIE TREVOR.

BY MRS. M. A. DENISON.

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CHAPTER X.

THE STRANGER'S VISIT.

"MAMMA—the lady—the lady," shouted little Marie, bounding into the room from Sally's domicil, where she had been enjoying a front view of the street—and she had hardly said when a sweet voice spoke outside the door, and the stranger entered.

"You will excuse me, dear madam, for taking this liberty," she gently murmured, after the servant had placed two small baskets on the table—"but I thought perhaps some little delicacy might tempt your appetite, as you are an invalid—I hope I have not intruded."

Mrs. Trevor had risen from the chair where she had been sewing propped up by pillows—but the lady motioned her to sit down again, and drawing another chair to her side, began talking in a low voice and with tender and familiar manner about little Marie. With what compassion she gazed upon the feeling, fragile creature—watched the tremulous glow upon the hollow cheek—the fitful fire of her eye—the shaking fingers—the attenuated frame, and that ghastly feint of strength, which makes the doomed invalid as much an object of wonder as compassion. And how like a fresh beam of sunlight from the open heavens stealing over purple hills and green sloping meadow-fields, was that visit to the poor widow.

Oh! we should visit the sick. We should go to them in their darkened chambers with smiles and words of love and consolation. We should carry the beauty and fragrance of sweet flowers, and if possible some seasonable fruit to let them feel that we forget not the poor invalid. And not only ourselves—it is well if the bright, innocent faces of childhood are sometimes allowed to cheer the darkened chamber.

"It is better than medicine," said a poor, wasted creature, "to see your little boy; what laughing eyes he has, and what a musical laugh;" and she called the merry child to her bedside and forgot her pain for the moment, as she pulled at

his glossy curls and stroked them back from his forehead. It was a slight pleasure that could thus rob her of pain. Who would not let sunny hearted childhood thus minister to the sorely stricken?

Forget not the sick and helpless; they are dependant very much upon sympathy, and *wishing* them well, or *pitying* them, is but doing a very little toward their comfort. Visit them often; it is far better than to dance in the halls of pleasure or minister to your own vanities and selfishness. A day is coming when a soft voice shall say, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto these the least of my little ones, ye did it unto me."

An hour passed so quietly, so pleasantly, that the poor consumptive hardly thought of her work, and when the pale, but extremely beautiful woman—angel she thought her, prepared to go—she gently took the coarse flannel from her hand, saying, "If you *will* labor, let me send you something to do. I have common sewing, for which I will give you at least a fair price, and I question very much whether you get it for what you do of this kind of work."

A flush of pleasure deepened—the hectic—as the widow looked her grateful thanks to the kind stranger.

"And may I ask the favor of a visit daily from this dear child?" she inquired, "it will so lighten my solitary hours, and take my mind sometimes from the laborious occupation I pursue. She will furnish me a delightful theme too—and I promise you you shall see her portrait in some fine journal or gilded annual." The widow gave her willing consent, and they parted.

No longer after this visit did Mrs. Trevor feel the slightest anxiety about her charge. "Shall I tell her?" she would often ask herself—"but oh, it will be so hard to undeceive the child—so sweet that she should fancy me even in death—her mother; and if I *must*, let it be in the last hour—I cannot bear to think of yet—let me have time. Who were her parents, who are her relatives she can hardly dream ever to learn—why make her sunny heart unquiet with the vague

hope of so doing? Well, I will wait God's time and Providence—I cannot do it yet."

Autumn came and with it that familiar friend death! "the liberator of him whom freedom cannot release—the physician of him whom medicine cannot cure, and the comforter of him whom time cannot console." He came, summoning the spirit with gentleness—but it was all prepared. Little Marie sat in the arms of her new friend, fast asleep. She had wept and sobbed till nature put her fiat on her grief, and closed the dove-like eyes, leaving the tears glittering on and under the long, thick lashes.

The widow had for hours laid insensible—her fair features chiseled to the clear, strong outline of death. Yet there was nothing repulsive in that dying scene—no distortion of limb or feature—no convulsive rattling of the breath—no groans—she laid like a slumbering infant—her eyes nearly unclosed and dim, but not stony in their unwrithing, steady look. She had no fears to dread, for her life had been as sinless as an erring mortal's may be—she had no doubts to solve—for she knew with a simple, earnest, loving knowledge, "He who is the way, the truth and the life."

It was growing dark. Sally came in with a candle, and setting it on the table away in the further corner, softly neared the bed of the dying. She no sooner saw the upturned face of the innocent child, so heavenly in its expression, than she fell to weeping very softly, murmuring in a voice scarcely audible, "dear little darling!"

"What of her—what of Marie?" whispered the dying one, feeling about as if for the grasp of some other hand.

It soon clasped that of the stranger—and smiling she turned her head and her almost sightless eyes toward that side where she sat, still whispering, "What of Marie—where is she?"

"Here," answered a gentle voice, "she has wept herself to sleep in my arms—shall I wake her?"

A slight pause, and the lips gathering a smile, parted again and whispered, "no—no—let her sleep."

"Have you anything to say with regard to your child?" asked the watcher, anxiously regarding the features of the dying.

"My child—mine—is it *mine*?" asked the other, laying great emphasis on the word, "mine"—"they brought her to me—she was very beautiful, you can't think how beautiful!" and the smile broke all over her face—"but, I had buried seven—and surely God sent her—yes—what is it

I would say?—something; oh! I have forgotten—forgotten," she feebly repeated.

"About Marie," suggested her friend, pressing her hand tenderly.

"Yes—yes—there is nothing but a box—the one under the table—you'll keep it—keep it for my sake. It isn't much—*his* log is in it," she continued, rapidly, as if with an effort of the memory, "his log, a few papers, old papers—and—and—I can't remember—I—" her voice failed her—only once more she spoke before she died, and then her thought busied itself with the box, "*his* log is there—and—"

There came a final hush. That white brow, that gentle heart would never throb with pain again. Watchers were procured—the lady threw a shawl over the slumbering child, and she was carried forever from her humble home, once more to sleep in the dainty lap of luxury—but never, never to forget the being who had proved how sweet, how undying the love of a mother can be.

CHAPTER XI.

NOBODY'S CHILD.

THE light plays in the sombre old alley as well as it can for the dust heaps, and tall, dark houses. Here and there through the tan of wind and sun, and layers of dirt, a spot of white, like the leaf of a lily, tells that beauty may dwell even here, sweet beauty of infancy. A child has fallen over yon broken door-step—it dreams, but not unwatched—for the homely mother leaves her suds to steal a quiet look and wish he may sleep till her toil is over. From little tongues the roll of the blasphemer summons spirits of evil to the wretched hovel, and begrimed imps play toss-penny and rub the dirt deeper in their sallow cheeks.

Nought disturbs the old alley, save penury and crime—the former lodges high among the cobwebs, where it can see the stars at night, the latter brawls and fights in foul cellars, and throws empty bottles at still emptier heads. Impudence swaggers and drunkenness staggers, swinging its lean hands against the rattling window-panes, and crushing in the old hat crowns that line the broken apertures.

Here comes a group worth studying. A boy with bright and sunny locks leading his little checked-frocked sister from the parish school. Poverty may be *his* heir-loom, but virtue locks hands with its meagre mate, and both may carry him safely through life.

"Well, my boy, and whose child are you?"

"Please—I'm Peggy's little boy what takes in ironing and washes. I and sister goes to school."

Just behind them with a slower step, but an eye like a hawk; his short, crisp curls clinging close to his brown forehead, comes another little fellow. His eye has brightened—perhaps at sound of a pleasing tone—and he fingers his rags nervously.

"And whose child are you, my little fellow?" Methinks somebody's who needs things and care, or perchance she may be wasting on a sick bed in poverty or crime.

See—his head droops—his eye fades—the curve of his lip changes to grief. He half looks up again, dashing the trembling tear from his dark lashes.

"Please—I ain't nobody's child."

Nobody's child—that plaintive voice—that stifled sob—visions of neglected graves in the poor's corner, they bring—of children clinging to the skirts of strange garments—weeping at the harsh voice of forced charity—shrinking from the uplifted hand of cruel avarice.

Nobody's child! what if his shrinking limbs stiffen with the cold? Who will, tear the tattered garment from her own perishing body to gather about her child?

Nobody.

Who when the sneer and taunt strike colder than death on the grieving heart, pours the balm of a love almost divine on the cruel wound?

Nobody.

Who when the vile lay unholy hands upon him and drag him to the dark haunts of sin, snatches him from the breakers at the peril of her life?

Nobody.

"Nobody, nobody to own me," bitterly murmured a beautiful girl, slowly lifting her face from her hands, and dashing away the tears that the first sudden revelation of sorrow had brought to her eyes—"oh! I wish I had never known this."

It was a strange place for one so lovely, attired as she was in garments befitting a station of opulence, the silken robe fallen ungathered on the dusky floor, from which she had once carefully lifted it—the thick, glossy braids and curls canopied by festoons of spider webs hanging from grim rafters—her seat a rough deal box, old and broken furniture strewed about—ghastly window-frames leaning against the wall, through which instead of sunshine the soiled and battered rafters looked—and only the one dim, solitary skylight, through which the day broke green and ghastly.

Exceedingly beautiful was the young girl, with brow so fair and pure, and eyes so deep and gentle, but now the faint rose that marked her cheek with health had faded; and still the tears

would come and hang glittering on the silken lashes.

Before her stood a Japan box, originally of a lively brown color, ornamented with gilt roses and green leaves. But the gilding and the tinting, and the burnishing had all given place to sober rust. There seemed to be nothing but papers in the box, all carefully folded, but thrown in confusion by the nimble fingers of the maiden. In her hand she held a stained and yellow manuscript, book it appeared to be, marked in a large, steady hand on the top margin, "Log." But a few moments before she had opened it at random, and was it chance that caused her eye to light upon the following?

"June 10th.—Here in sight of a Boston bark going to Mattanzers. Wether little squally—exchanged words and went on. Toward afternoon, the first mate saw something to leeward. Proved to be a small sailing craft, a baby aboard. Cap'n had it hauled alongside—gave it to me. Bless the Lord, oh! my soul and remember all His benefits—for he took seven away from me, and He give me this, so as I shouldn't be childless in my old age."

Much more had the honest sailor recorded, but it was not that that claimed the young girl's attention as much as a small pocket that had been pressed in between the leaves, and opening which she found to contain two very beautiful clasps of chased gold, attached to faded ribbons that had once been blue, a scrap of rich lace, being a piece of an infant's frock, and a paper on which a few lines had been traced with a tremulous hand—thus.

"My darling little Marie, I could not bring myself to tell you before that you were not my own sweet child. But I cannot die in peace without informing you that you were as my poor husband says in his log, 'June 10th,' a little ocean foundling. My strength will not allow me to pen down my conjectures, further than to say. I think your parents were shipwrecked, though how that could be, when there had been no violent storm, it is hard to imagine. Sweet child, I cannot write any more. May the God of the orphan protect you—He will, my soul says he will. Farewell, when you read these lines, I shall be in my grave."

"Dust and ashes, long, long before this," murmured Marie, who it need scarcely be told had grown into lovely womanhood: and rising, she refolded the paper, hastily shut the box, and taking the log-book in her hand, hurried out of the dusky garret to her own chamber. Here the early morning threw in long, wavy plumes of light, and laid his bright beams all robed in gold

in among the folds of the crimson hangings, and blazed in the rich casing of the mirrors that lined the walls. It was the chamber of lovely maidenhood, of luxury, of every ingenious device almost that taste could fashion.

On the marble dressing-table were various beautiful ornaments, and written or marked, or cunningly worked thereon were the words, "to Marie," "to my sweet, foster child," "to the light of the household," etc.

In a small grate overtopped by an exquisite mantel frame in porcelain, a fire was brightly burning, for the season was the stormy month of March. In a little recess stood a bed, draped with great elegance: a series of rose-wood shelves held many of the standard authors, and two immense easy-chairs of red velvet comfortably lounged on each side of the Berlin rug.

In one of these Marie threw herself, and held the yellow parchment again before her vision. Then she toyed with the golden clasps, and anon sat lost in thought, a bewitching sadness playing over her pensive features, a look of perplexity making her even more charming than the radiant expression of happiness which oftentimes challenged admiration.

"Who could they be, and who am I?" she kept asking, turning the baubles over and over, and scanning them in every light. "Poor and humble they could hardly have been, and they perished; the great ocean rolls above them—who then are my kindred? Oh! shall I ever meet them? Will they know these? Will nature tell them my origin? No, scarcely. And, dear mother—for I must call her by the name I have since infancy—how will this knowledge affect her? What when she knows I am no longer the child of the poor sailor's widow? Will not apprehension rob her of that parental tenderness with which she has ever guarded me? Oh! no, she never can feel less than a mother's love—I know I am very dear to her—and in the hours when pain racks her frame, and some silent, mental sorrow fills her soul with anguish, how often has she told me I was her only solace. And now I dread to tell her this new found secret, why, I hardly know. I should dread also to have my friends, or my more noble, better loved Frederic learn it."

Thus musing and talking by turns, the fair girl laid her acquisition in an escritoire, and placed the ornaments in a little box of ebony.

Scarcely had she done so, when a cheerful voice accompanied by a rap, said, "May I come in, love?" and a handsome face, though marked with care and sorrow, appeared at the opened door. Marie's confusion was extreme—the blood

rushed over cheek and brow—the sweet voice trembled, and even the motion of her step was unsteady as she hurried forward, murmuring, "Good morning, dear mother."

"I grew nervous and lonesome in my room, Marie," said the new comer, "neither my easel nor my pen afforded me pleasure: the more I do to your portrait the more childish it seems; it will resemble *her* spite of all I can do," she added, musingly.

"Who, mother?" asked Marie, regaining her self-possession—"did you ever have any children?" she added, with forced carelessness, "you frequently speak of a little child."

"Marie," exclaimed the woman, with such vehemence that the young girl absolutely started from her seat, "you awakened thoughts, emotions that I hoped slumbered forever," she said, after a pause—"no, I never was blessed with a child—God was good in giving *you* to me. No, I was a poor, lonely, uncared for being, wasting my genius in bitter self-communion till I saw Le Dunlap, my husband. He was rich—I a poor housekeeper—you are surprised, Marie—a writer of lines breathing passion, utter indifference to life, melancholy of the most isolated and soul-consuming character. He saw and called me beautiful. He praised my genius; in fine he loved me devotedly, and I became his wife. Mine, then, were all the treasures I had longed for; mine the splendor of fashion—mine the wealth of fame, for when I became sick there were not wanting those parasites who fawn and flutter before the idol of the hour, to do me homage, and sound to the world what capacities, what wonders of talent were mine. My husband provided me tutors; soon there was scarcely a language spoken under heaven but I could understand. Music was my passion—painting my favorite art—books were sweet and tender friends—lofty teachers stern rebukers, silent and ever devoted companions. My husband filled his house with amateurs—sculptors and poets gathered at our reunions—and when I looked around on the noble array of the world's great, my heart beat exultingly that I—I—the poor peasants—" her voice faltered, "the daughter of humble and almost unknown people, had called thus to do homage to her intellect, those for whose fragments of time many a titled aristocrat would part with half his fortune."

"And you must have been so happy," murmured Marie, gazing in wonder and admiration on the now glowing face beside her; "nay, you *must* be so happy now. Everybody who knows you feels honored by one word—one look."

"Poor child," exclaimed the other, in thrilling

tones, her face relapsing into sternness, "and do you think all these bring happiness? No! nor mountain heaps of solid gold—nor thousand fields, covered with glittering diamonds—nor Gabriel's knowledge—nor an angel's capacity for enjoyment, if one thing be wanting, that, without which, heaven would be as hell—innocence—the conscience at rest."

She had said this rapidly, without, as it were, taking thought or breath; now she cowered under Marie's mournful, asking look, and hid her face in her hands. When she raised it, there was no trace of color, all an ashy whiteness.

"I see," she said, steadying her trembling voice, "I see that I shall yet have to unbosom myself even to you, Marie; but, believe me, whatever I have done was not from the necessity of a depraved nature—I had been injured, cruelly injured, Marie—cruelly, most bitterly, cruelly wronged. You believe me?" and she laid one fair, white hand on Marie's lap.

"Believe you—indeed, I do. Why should I doubt one whose kindness has showered blessings on me almost ever since—I—I can remember! What had I been but for you? A poor, little outcast orphan, dependant on charity, on the cruel kindness of a selfish world. But instead, look at the home you have given me; behold how you have surrounded me with choice gifts, the choicest of which are the refinements of a generous and complete education. Oh! my more than mother, I weep sometimes with very joy when I think of all this. *Believe you!* I'll believe nought against you. But tell me more of your wonderful life."

"I have not *lived* since *he* died," murmured the other, wiping away the happy tears caused by Marie's tender speech, "save in your love. It was only a year before I met you that he was taken from me. Just as I began to see new beauties in his noble character—to feel new delight in his society—to look upon him as the light and life of my life. He was taken in the full vigor of manhood—well at morning—at night a corpse. How I bore the stunning stroke I cannot tell, except to say that I survived. Plenty of wealth—a life of ease—all the resources of the rich and talented, were left me—still was I the theme of all tongues—the wonder of many eyes—but, oh! the lack of real comfort. Do you know," she suddenly exclaimed, with startling emphasis, "that, in Malachi, there is this awful denunciation, 'I will curse your blessings!' Think—think of our very blessings being turned to curses—our very wealth—our very health—our very knowledge,

all—all curses to rot the very marrow of existence."

"I cannot bear to see you in this mood," said Marie, tearfully.

"Well, it is wrong, I allow, to inflict upon youth such baneful thoughts; come, forget them. What shall we do? select the most becoming dress in your wardrobe for your conquest of this young Lord Henry. Come, now, actually, you are weeping; don't you see how I have changed? that I am grown merry as a lark? Wake up my bird, and sing to me; see what I have brought you for a birth-day present," and she displayed a rare set of costly jewels; "by the way, we have no exact date of your birth, have we? I was looking over that old Bible of your mother's, not long ago, and I do not see your name; that is strange, is it not? I recollect, though, on the wild March morning on which your mother died, she said—and it was the fifteenth, you remember—'poor, little Marie—poor orphan—to day she must be six;' but even then I think she was wandering, for she talked so oddly about you—that in heaven it would be hard not to call you her own. Yes, she *must* have wandered. However, I shall always celebrate the fifteenth."

During this recital of old reminiscences, Marie had been unwontedly agitated—the color now coming, now disappearing. "I, too, have something to tell," she would have said, but a secret misgiving prevented her. "Not this morning," she thought, "she has been herself too violently agitated—I will yet wait a little."

She could not help the sparkle in her eye, spite of the tears, at sight of the beautiful brilliants. She held them over her hand, and rising, threw an arm about the neck of her foster-mother, and gratefully kissed her, thanking her again and again.

"I only ask you to look your best to-night," repeated the latter; "wear these jewels, and let your beauty shame their lustre. We are to have this noble lord, you know," she added, with a strangely peculiar expression, something that sounded like a sneer, "and he has not the vices attendant too often on nobility. Wherever I hear of him he is spoken of as a pattern of manly virtue—indeed, if he was not inately great, he should never be introduced to my Marie. Good morning, love—be happy," and kissing her once more, she moved hastily out, and into her own room.

It was larger, and more sombrely furnished, and yet with a greater degree of splendor. Rare paintings, enclosed in massive frames, hung against the walls, and the drapery, though

subdued, in gleaming tints caught the full light of the capricious sun, or lay in deep, rich shadow till some light touch made it glow again.

Here Mrs. Le Dunlap sat down before a desk of beautiful workmanship, and began assorting the papers before her. But often would she stop and gaze on vacancy, her attitude so motionless that it was statue-like, and sometimes her lips moved. At length she broke out into audible speech. "It will be a double triumph," she exclaimed, with energy; "*they* will not know it, but *I* shall, and knowing, hug the knowledge to my heart. Perhaps some day after I am gone, a letter will inform them, and gall their proud spirits. As the daughter of one who stood first in the esteem of his countrymen—who himself descended from nobility—they will not wince when her birth is called in question; but as the child of a common sailor—ah! that will bring them down—nor injure Marie, secure as she will be in the love of a fond heart. As to Frederic, consulting my heart's best inclinations, I had rather she would be his wife; but I know not if he loves her, and Lord Henry Walden—how the name thrills me—I am certain he adores her, and even did, before he saw her. Triumph—triumph! She shall certainly marry Lord Henry—she shall be exalted—I always knew—always felt it. There is something in Marie worthy a throne. When she is married, then—even then I shall not dare to say, 'Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,' for never—never will peace be a tenant of this bosom."

And still Marie sat in her room, often repeating, "alas! I am in reality 'nobody's child.'"

CHAPTER XII.

THE BALL.

BRIGHT was the throng, and light the spirits of the "select many," assembled on Marie's birth-night, to wish her heartfelt, happy returns. Youth and beauty were there, but in no form did they so admirably blend as in that of Marie, who passed through the rooms gracefully leaning on the arm of her foster-mother, and saluting the company as she moved along. A wreath of brilliants lay locked in the light embrace of her beautiful golden hair. A robe frail as gossamer, yet sparkling with silver embroidery, fell over skirts of showy satin. Her full, blue eye beamed with intellect, yet was as drooping and timid at the too eager gaze as that of a fawn. Her lips, full and pouting, were just parted a little; a delectable blush touched the fair cheek with a spring-like and faint crimson,

such as parts the snow on a young rose-bud. An indescribable sweetness pervaded every feature; an admirable majesty mingled with her modesty of mien; she was in truth not the belle of the evening, it were almost sacrilege to use a term so common, but the very incarnation of womanly grace and purity—the fairest of all fair, earthly things.

The cynosure of all eyes was she—yet there were two persons who, stationed apart, could not seem to move their glances from the fair object—but when the envious crowd obtruded its shapeless outline between them and her beautiful form, they would each move, perchance, with careless steps till some rent disclosed the star shining, undimmed, in transcendent loveliness.

One of these bore the impress of manhood, and though there were no lines of anxious thought nor impress of carking care, yet many a struggle had his been with adverse fate, and calmer looked his brow, deeper and more thoughtful his keen yet gentle eye, while his expression was as though he had said, "I have conquered myself—I have conquered fortune—I feel myself a man." His form was erect, massively made, though the exceeding symmetry of its proportions prevented that appearance of heaviness which sometimes allies itself to greatness, using the word in more senses than one. Thought sat upon his brow as on a monument, the enduring triumph of the sculptor's fame. He was the favorite of genius, for she seemed to have thrown her best and choicest gifts at his feet. He could summon the muses at his will. He could sit at the harp, and while inspiration seemed thrown round him as a mantle, improvise hour after hour. He could idly take the limner's pencil, and from his laboratory of memory bring forth the most exquisite specimens of art. He could sing, so some said, like an angel, and yet with all these gifts he was neither vain nor arrogant: nor yet did he neglect the sterner duties of the law. These things were his recreation as well as his delight, and withal he could use them for the happiness of others. Such was the man within whose noble soul was shrined a love as deep and fervent as ever cherished by mortal hope. Such he who stood, admiration and tenderness alternately giving his expressive features a beauty that was scarcely of earth, while unconsciously he pictured the pleasure of those in whose hand lay that of the lovely Marie, though but for an instant.

Quite near him stood another gentleman, upon whom many eyes were turned, and many young hearts palpitated with the anticipated delight of an introduction to a real lord. Very handsome,

yet unpresuming in manner was the young nobleman: but there was much less of character in the play of his sparkling features; and the slight down upon his chin told that manhood's years were yet in prospective. In manners he possessed that careless, dashing air which those men sport upon whom sorrow has never yet poured a drop from her phial—upon whom fortune has smiled from the cradle, and for whom ease sits embroidering the golden slippers of opulence. Yet his frank, white brow, his sunny locks, and eye of blue so liquid and tender, won for him the admiration of all who met him. To-night he was the lion of the feast; the head and shoulders of the whole company.

Very marked was the difference with which Marie greeted her admirers—and Lord Henry was one of her most devoted lovers—she held out her hand reservedly and blushing to Frederic Le Dunlap, the nephew of her adopted mother: she raised not her eyes, and her accents of welcome were hurried. One would almost have thought there was something of dislike in her abrupt, or rather nervous manner. To Lord Henry she frankly gave her hand: indeed, answered his queries with a lightness of tone quite flattering to his vanity, if vanity he had, and surely the seemingly marked preference of the most beautiful woman present, might well excuse some little self-approval.

It was to Marie an eventful night. Queen of the festive scene, she tripped it among the others with a grace and lightness absolutely bewitching. And when she wandered for a brief time of thought with slower step through the conservatories of rare plants and flowers, her heart beat with a rapidity that was not lessened on observing there Frederic Le Dunlap. He stood with pensive brow, and welcomed her with a smile that was almost sad. For an instant her confusion was extreme: she turned to retreat, but he stepped hastily forward, exclaiming in a low, but fervent tone, "Marie, hear me—but one word," and then he took her hands and gazed in her blushing face.

In that hour were the words spoken that gave Marie's happiness in the keeping of another. She had not dreamed, nay, had not hoped for the opportunity so soon: long had she loved, devotedly, the man who was worthy of all noble love, but never had she dared lip it to herself. And could it be that she had frankly told another, and that other, till within a few months a total stranger to her, except as she read his exalted mind in the letters that passed to and fro between his brother's wife and himself? Strange, sweet, inexplicable consistency. And in the

midst of her triumph—for it was a triumph to call forth such love, a low voice pleaded at her side, would she walk on the balcony only one little minute. Trembling she knew not why, yet consenting, she allowed herself to be led on the well screened balcony, which, illuminated with soft, glow-like lamps, warmed by artificial heat and garlanded with flowers, made a pleasant promenade for the wearied dancers. There again she listened to the accents of a lover. Little had she dreamed that such feelings slumbered in the bosom of the young lord, for innocent of any emotion toward him other than friendship, and drawn irresistibly by his frankness and urbanity of manner into a sort of good-humored familiarity, she had treated him as a brother, admired his pleasing exterior, and perhaps unconsciously led him to think she was interested in him. She had taken all her aunt's familiar talk with reference to Lord Henry as pleasant badinage, for she knew how highly she esteemed the brother of her beloved husband. It was then in sorrow, almost in tears, that she absolutely declined his offer—a coquettish triumph was not hers, nor a coquette's vanity—and she saw the cheek turn pale, and the eye darken sadly with a keenness of anguish that quite unfitted her for further participation in the gay scene. So while lovers were whispering and flirts ogling, while sweet strains of music made melodious every sound that floated by, she excused herself, and in company with her aunt, who attributed her lassitude and nervousness to flutter of spirits, caused by the young lord's confession, left the festive banquet.

It was long after midnight, and the pale morning, lifting her veil of sable, threw a dim glance over the hills, and strove faintly to penetrate thick casements—but still the white stars kept blinking. For hours had Marie paced her room, with the yellow papers bequeathed by the sailor's widow rustling in her hand, her mind agitated by conflicting doubts and emotions. Was it not a futile attempt, even in thought, to penetrate the mystery enshrouding her? If it was found that hers was a dishonorable birth, a slow consuming grief would eat away her young life; again, what hope could she cherish of ever finding her kindred? Better to burn the papers—to destroy the clasps—to solemnly covenant with herself that forever, no word of this discovery should ever pass her lips. But after a distressing mental conflict honesty of purpose triumphed—It would be better to make a full confession, and now when the weight of the burden had become insupportable. Throwing a light shawl over her dress, she took the night-lamp, and cautiously

moving to her foster-mother's chamber, knocked softly.

After some little delay, a voice said, "Come in;" and Marie cautiously opened the door and entered, though with unsteady step.

Mrs. Le Dunlap had just gathered her luxuriant tresses, now slightly silvered by time and sorrow, under a neat cap: and though her night toilet was finished, she sat, pen in hand, before a table, upon and about which laid little heaps of paper. A small lamp shone full on her yet handsome face—the dilated eye and rapt expression denoted the struggle of burning thought within.

"You, Marie!" she exclaimed, hastily rising, "come here, my love, and take the chair next to me—ah! I guess your errand—but—but you look pale, you tremble—is it so sad a thing then to receive a lover's declaration?"

Marie blushed deeply.

"Ah! I knew I was right!" exclaimed Mrs. Le Dunlap, triumphantly, "you shall tell me all about it; confide in me, dearest—confide wholly in me."

"You said you could guess my errand," said Marie, in a low voice.

"Yes, and I did—did I not?" asked the other, affectionately.

"No, not wholly; nor I think can you guess for what purpose I have sought you."

Mrs. Le Dunlap looked her amazement, but was silent for a moment, then said, "As I told you before, Marie, confide in me wholly—you should have no secrets from me—nor will you, my sweet, dutiful girl; come, I must smile at your trepidation, and yet I am all impatience to comfort you if you need comfort."

"Indeed I do," answered Marie, earnestly—"but in this case I hardly think you or any one on earth can solve my doubts and put my anxiety to rest. Some few mornings ago I wanted a very old copy of 'Bunyan's Pilgrims Progress,' that I remembered seeing years ago in the garret."

"Well," said Mrs. Le Dunlap, smilingly.

"Clement was peevish and suffering besides with a bad headache—and as I knew the other servants were variously engaged—I concluded to look among the old rubbish myself. The garret was quite gloomy and dark; and not being able to see well, I stumbled over a small japan box, that in falling burst its lock, and out came hundreds of worm-eaten papers."

Her foster-mother shifted her position a little to indicate awakened interest, and motioned her to continue her narrative.

"Being curiously disposed just then, I glanced them over carelessly, and saw they had once

belonged to—to her from whom you took me. Looking further on, I learned the strange, unwelcome truth that she was not my mother."

"What!" exclaimed her auditor, letting fall her hands, and gazing with wide open eyes on the beautiful face before her—"do you mean it? not your mother! who then—*who?*"

"Alas! I know no more than yourself; but let me show you what I found," and she read for the hundredth time the scrap from Jack Trevor's Log.

"Take the lamp away," muttered her foster-mother, in a strangely altered voice, "it is too strong for my sight, and read it again."

Marie complied, and then went on to the poor widow's letter, during which she did not see the strong agitation that shook her foster-mother's frame—the ashy, corpse-like pallor of her cheeks—the dry, burning eye—the parted and convulsed lips. When she had finished a half-suppressed moan fell from the lips of her auditor—and then she whispered hoarsely, still holding her hand before her face, "Is that all?"

"No, dear mother, for I shall ever call you mother," answered Marie, softly, "but look, these bits of gold, this shred of lace were folded in between the leaves of the log. Could they have been parts of my dress at the time?"

Mrs. Le Dunlap removed her hand for an instant, looked at the gold, the lace, gazed haggardly at Marie, who shrunk from her strange manner, cried in a loud voice, "My God, can it be possible?" and fell forward on the table, where her head laid heavily like that of a corpse.

Marie sprang trembling to her feet. What meant that sudden glance of anger or remorse?—what meant this unusual emotion? Had she in reality found a parent? Was this her frail mother, and this the sin that seemed at times to crush her to the earth? Was she the child to whom often reference had been made, always coupled with tears and deep feeling? And how had she been cast away? Would public ignominy answer?—would the mother in owning her, own her sin?

All these and many other thoughts passed with the rapidity of lightning through the mind of the perplexed girl; she laid her hand on Mrs. Le Dunlap and whispered, "Mother"—then seeing no assent or motion, she said louder, "mother, are you ill?"

Still there was neither the drawing of a breath or stirring of a muscle. Marie grew frightened, she passed her hand under her brow, all seemed cold and rigid—she rang in alarm for a servant, and presently the old serving-maid hurried in with wild looks and clothes hastily thrown on.

"Is the house on fire?" she asked, glancing wildly round; "murder—robbers—thieves—oh! ring all the bells in the house."

"Hush!" exclaimed Marie, as sternly as she could for her tears; "nothing is the matter, except that your mistress seems ill—faint—cold—I dare not—dare not think dead," she falteringly added.

"Oh! poor, blessed heart—one of her old turns," cried the garrulous domestic, bustling up to her mistress. "She's had them often—I know just what to do; give me that camfire, dear heart, and that little bottle of sally votille—now you rub one hand and I'll rub the other—there! you see, she's coming to quick as chalk. She shouldn't keep such late hours; I told her so myself—but, la! she don't mind what I say no more'n chalk. Hey dear?" she muttered, in a lower tone, stooping down by the now reviving woman.

"Let me be alone," murmured Mrs. Le Dunlap, sighing deeply. "Marie, I will call if I want you—Philly, assist me to bed—I shall feel better soon."

The sun was just rising when Philly knocked at the door of Marie's chamber, and delivered a message from the invalid. Marie had not slept, but had passed her time in perplexing thought. She hastily obeyed the summons, and on hurrying to the bedside was frightened at the alteration visible in the countenance of her foster-mother. Some great struggle had changed her features to a rigid, stony cast, and her hair had surely turned whiter over her broad brow.

"Marie, my child," she said, taking her hand and gazing fondly upon her, "look at me fully, steadily in the face;" then she gazed with an inquiring earnestness on those beautiful features, closed her eyes, and still holding Marie's hand, murmured, "yes, thank God! I have at last conquered—He is merciful—I have overcome myself. Would you think I ever had cause to hate you, Marie, my child?" she languidly inquired, yet fondly smiling.

"Hate me! oh! why? what have I ever done that *any one* should hate me?—no, no; *you*, all goodness that you are, *never* had such thoughts toward me."

"You say truly, yet might not I think I had cause—*cause*?" she repeated, with feeling—"but thank God, merciful is He that I have not become in deed as in thought, a murderer. Nay, do not shrink from me so, my love—in time you shall know my whole history, and then you will weep with and for me, nor wonder that reason gave place to passion. And with me you will see the wonderful retributive justice of the

Almighty, who has entrusted entirely to my charge the innocent being I both disliked and wronged. I am quite calm now, Marie, don't shrink from me and break my heart; there," she added, tearfully, as Marie sat down by her side and took both her feverish hands in hers, "that is my own child whom I have—strange contradiction, is it not?—hated and wronged, loved and cherished. And now what more had you to tell me last night? My heart feels confused, but I think you hinted at something else."

"Did you not half guess at the time?" asked Marie, blushing.

"What! a proposal?"

"Yes," answered the fair girl, modestly.

"But you do not love him—you *cannot* love him!" exclaimed Mrs. Le Dunlap, rising as she spoke, her thoughts referring to Lord Henry, "say that you do not love him—oh! why have I sinned thus? your looks tell me you *do*. Marie, if you love him, I am doubly punished."

"But, my dear mother, you yourself—"

"I know all you would say—acknowledge my wicked spirit—my pride, my foolish, remorseful pride urged me on—why, I know not, unless the fiends entered me—alas! then—and he loves *you*."

Marie did not answer—she knew not what to say—this mystery, this vehemence astonished her.

"If there is any dishonorable circumstance attending the knowledge of my birth, I would not have one so dear to you, the brother of your husband, noble and frank, and all that is good as he is, connected with me who would perhaps bring you and him disgrace."

"Dear to me—my husband—can it be of Frederic you speak? Of our Frederic? God bless you, then all is right; I thought you spoke of Lord Henry—I thought certainly he had made you an offer of his hand."

"And he did, dear mother."

"Mother! I love to hear that—and you rejected him? Poor fellow, he *does* love you then, I read it in every movement, in each glance—I read his worshipping love. How could he help it? Nature, nature was his teacher—she told him where his own blood flowed through the veins of another."

"You are enigmatical, mother."

"Let me be so for awhile—bear with my silence, for when I speak I will have something pleasant to tell you. Good morning—go and seek your rest. Next week, God willing, we shall start for the continent—you look surprised, but I tell you to marvel at nothing for six good

months to come. Trust all to me, my darling—
now go.”

“The first happy moment for eighteen long
years!” exclaimed the foster-mother, as Marie
left her; and she clasped her hands and raised
her eyes heavenward with reverent thankfulness,

“sweet, sweet to forgive and find peace at last;
sweet to throw off the terrors of a burdened con-
science. All my fears are past. Henceforward I
shall seek my pillow without tears. Oh! happy,
happy morning!” (TO BE CONTINUED.)

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"CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME."

BY MARY L. MEANY.

It was on a bright, cold morning in early winter, that Mrs. Gray commenced the arduous task of visiting the entire circle of her acquaintance, friendly calls, as she said, with business purposes. Mrs. Dr. Baldwin was her most particular friend, and on her she made the first call. At the first pause in their conversation the visitor announced her errand.

"I hope you are in a very charitable mood, to-day, for I have come begging?"

"Indeed! what is the object that has now excited your sympathies?"

"There are two," was the reply, "but I must first speak of the one in which I am particularly interested. As you are aware our church is encumbered with a heavy debt, on account of the repairs that were thought necessary some time ago; and every effort to liquidate it having proved unsuccessful, several ladies have proposed holding a Fancy Fair. Rev. Mr. B—— has sanctioned the project, and I, as one of the originators thereof, have made out a list of those ladies from whose taste and liberality I expect a good deal of assistance; and at the head of the list stands, of course, the name of Mrs. Dr. Baldwin."

Mrs. Baldwin bowed in acknowledgment of the compliment, but expressed regret that her friend's choice had not fallen on some one else, so that she might have a more auspicious commencement.

"Nay, no excuse—no refusal, my dear," interrupted Mrs. Gray, playfully. "I assure you I will not take either, for I anticipated valuable aid from you for my table."

"I am sorry then that I must disappoint your expectations by acquainting you with my determination to have nothing to do with this proposed Fair," was Mrs. Baldwin's reply. "You are not ignorant, I presume, of my views in regard to the debt so foolishly incurred."

"Now, Mrs. Baldwin," hastily interposed the visitor, "you surely will not refuse to help us out of our difficulty merely because you think the improvements made were unnecessary. You know our poor church was miserably plain—in fact, it was quite shabby. I, for one, felt ashamed to say that I belonged to it. But now, as every one says, it is quite creditable to the taste and zeal of the members."

"Why do you not add that it quite equals St. James' church in appearance, which was the leading motive after all?" said Mrs. Baldwin, looking archly at the other lady, who could not repress a conscious smile. "Our 'poor church' was very comfortable, and its plainness never struck us unpleasantly till St. James' was newly painted and decorated. Then ours became suddenly so very shabby in the eyes of the majority, that they speedily decided on the like improvements; not considering that the rival congregation had been for years accumulating a fund for the purpose, so that they neither incurred a debt nor subtracted from the usual fund for benevolent purposes. Our congregation on the contrary, thoughtlessly contracted a heavy debt, the consequences of which will fall most heavily on the poor, whose wants will be little considered, while every effort is needed for the success of the Fair."

"So you will not help me even by a trifle!" queried Mrs. Gray, with evident disappointment.

"Not this time; if I were not on principle opposed to the Fair, I should gladly assist you in your undertaking. But you have another object, I believe, on hand; perhaps that will suit my old-fashioned notions better."

Mrs. Gray took a small book from her reticule. "This is for subscriptions and donations to the Foreign Missions. You have never joined our society—do let me register your name."

Mrs. Baldwin shook her head gravely. "For those whose wealth enables them to contribute to this object without neglecting home charities, such a society may answer very well, but as I too often find my means insufficient to relieve the distress that comes under my observation, I must beg you to excuse my non-compliance with your request."

"Ah, now, Mrs. Baldwin, this is all a jest, I am sure; it is not like you to be so uncharitable."

"I can see no charity in sending a few dollars across wide oceans, while there are many persons in my own city in sad need of even the merest trifle."

"But we need not bestow all our sympathy on them," urged the visitor. "We can give to the poor, and yet not withhold our mite from the poor heathen."

"My dear friend," resumed her hostess,

seriously, "although as a member of a benevolent society you see a great deal of destitution, you have no idea of the real want and suffering which are all around us. You go among a few of those who apply to the society for relief; but there are many who reduced from competence to utter penury, struggle despairingly against adverse circumstances, and would rather die in the most frightful misery than solicit charity. Dr. Baldwin finds many such persons among his patients, and 'tis often a source of real regret to us both that we have it not in our power to make them as comfortable as we wish. Could I then consistently lessen still more my ability to help them by giving to the Missionary Society?"

"But could you not spare this trifle in the year without taking from your other charities?" resumed Mrs. Gray. "The doctor's income is as large as my husband's, I know, and we both give to the Missions without, I trust, neglecting the poor. Then why couldn't you? You are not as extravagant in many things as I am, and your family is no larger than ours—but yes, it is too—I had forgotten that you have your nieces living with you, and that makes a great difference, especially as you are bringing them up the same as your *own girls*, and the cost of *their* education is no trifling sum?"

"No, but it is a necessary expense. But," added Mrs. Baldwin, smiling, "perhaps you think my nieces might be deprived of a liberal education, in order to spare money for the Missions?"

"Oh, I know you would not do that. Yet I do not think it is incumbent on us to support every relation who happens not to be well provided for; and to bring them up, if children, in the manner one's own children are brought up."

A tear started to Mrs. Baldwin's eye, and she said sadly,

"When my sister died her three little girls were left in my care. I promised her that as far as I could I would supply her place to them, and even if no such promise had been given I should consider it obligatory on me to do so. The doctor was not only willing but desirous that I should take charge of them, and of course we make no difference between them and their cousins."

"Well, they have been quite fortunate, but it is a great charge upon you. I would not be burdened in such a way."

"Oh, yes, you would! I would not think so hardly of you as to believe that your words express your real sentiments. Yet I know there are not a few who have such views and act in accordance. Their hearts are touched by the sight of misery, their purse is ever open to

relieve 'the poor;' yet they are aware all the time that some of their own kindred, or at least some of their former acquaintances are struggling in secret against distress as great as that which they will relieve in strangers. They are filled with zeal for the conversion of the 'heathen,' while to their domestics they will not willingly give sufficient time to attend to religious duties. Nay, I have known some of those pious, zealous ladies who, while anxious for the conversion of the whole world, never found time to instill religious sentiments into the hearts of their children. Now all this seems to me false, or at least mistaken charity and zeal. 'Let charity begin at home,' is my motto. When we have given due care to our own families, to those of our kindred who may be in need, then if we have money and time to spare for others it is our duty remember them."

Mrs. Gray colored and looked down as if the remarks of her hostess had awakened some unpleasant thoughts; but she rallied from the momentary embarrassment and introduced a new topic.

As she was about taking leave Mrs. Baldwin's two youngest children came down stairs with their nurse ready for their morning walk. Mrs. Gray waited until they had left the house, when she remarked,

"That is a nice-looking girl you have in Jane's place. And by-the-way how is Jane? She ought to have recovered ere this, unless her injuries were very severe."

"They were," said Mrs. Baldwin, "and although she is now so much better that she thinks in a few weeks she can resume the charge of the children; the doctor is of opinion she will not be able to go much about the house for some time. Her accident was a fearful one, we had little hopes at first that she could recover from her wounds."

"And you have kept her here all the time, having the trouble and expense of her illness—and I did hear the other day that you still pay her wages, although having another girl in her place. Is it so?"

"Most certainly. Poor Jane has been a faithful nurse to my little ones for several years, and I could not think of discontinuing her wages, which are great use to her mother and three young sisters."

"Ah, well, there is no use in talking to you, I see; but I cannot help thinking what nice little ornaments you could buy for my table with the money you have spent on Jane," said Mrs. Gray, as she laughingly repeated her adieus and tripped away.

The winter passed on, quickly to the ladies interested in the projected Fair—slowly and sadly to many of the poor belonging to the congregation, who, as Mrs. Baldwin had anticipated, were but sparingly provided for. At Easter, the Fair was held, and was successful even beyond the hopes of its most sanguine advocates. A few days after it closed Mrs. Gray was again a visitor to Mrs. Baldwin, to whom she gave a glowing account of the Fair in general, and her own table in particular, which she had had the gratification of hearing pronounced the handsomest in the room. She was interrupted at length by the entrance of another visitor—a person who of all her acquaintance she least desired to see. For years there had been a rivalry between Mrs. Gray and Mrs. Stuart, and as the former generally bore off the palm, the latter took revenge by contriving to make her rival uncomfortable when they chanced to meet by some disagreeable remarks. On this occasion there was a glitter in her eyes as they fell upon Mrs. Gray, which she thought ominous; and she was about bringing her visit to a close when she was decided to remain by hearing Mrs. Stuart say that her stay would be very brief, as she was merely paying a few calls to particular friends after her return from Virginia, where she had been spending the last two months. Apparently forgetful of Mrs. Gray's presence she went on to detail the various pleasant incidents connected with her trip to the South, until startled by the striking of the clock she rose abruptly, declaring that she had overstaid the time to which she had limited herself. After warmly pressing her hostess to return the call as soon as possible she glanced to Mrs. Gray, and said, carelessly, "I presume I need not invite you, but perhaps you will condescend to call at our house to see one of your Virginia relatives who is living with me."

Mrs. Gray colored, haughtily saying, there must be a mistake.

"Not at all," replied Mrs. Stuart, with an air of triumph. "There is no mistake, I assure you, Mrs. Gray, for one of my friends there, Mrs. George Hargrave, was with your cousin when she died, and took charge of her four children, the eldest of whom she obtained a place for, the next in age I brought with me to take care of my little Emma, and the two youngest are still at Mrs. Hargrave's, as there is no orphan asylum in the town, and she does not

wish them to suffer. She was very kind to their mother while she was sick, and from all I heard she stood in great need of charity, for she was entirely destitute. I should not have known that she was related to you, but Mrs. Hargrave found, among the few things she left, a letter from you, which it appeared was written on the receipt of one from her begging some assistance, which you were unable, the letter stated, to give. If you would like to do anything for the two little boys, you can write to Mrs. Hargrave, as they are a great charge upon her. She was glad that I took Sally, who, by the way, is the image of your Kate—rather indolent and self-willed, too; but as I have had her bound it will be worth while to take some trouble with her, and I expect I will be able to make her useful."

Poor Mrs. Gray! The color came and went painfully during this harangue, and she could not trust herself to reply to her tormentor; but when alone with Mrs. Baldwin she gave full vent to her indignation, while that lady, who commiserated her mortified feelings, strove to soothe her irritation, though she could not forbear gently hinting how much more real benevolence would have been shown in relieving the distressed family than in helping to liquidate the church debt. Mrs. Gray did not controvert this suggestion. During her walk home, she recalled that mournful appeal to her, penned by the dying woman, which she had disregarded in her vain desire to have a prominent part in "public charities." The memory went back to the period of girlhood, when her deceased cousin had been her favorite companion—she recalled, with an emotion of shame, the neglect with which she had treated that cousin, after her husband had become dissipated—how she had striven to banish the recollection of her *poor relation*—she thought over it all, now, and while remorse blended with her anger against Mrs. Stuart, she almost determined to extend that relief to the two orphaned boys which she had cruelly withheld from their unhappy mother.

This resolution, however, was never put in practice; for, many articles remaining on hand after the Fair, it was decided to add as much as possible to the number and hold a sale at the ensuing Christmas. Mrs. Gray, of course, must be one of the leading spirits in this undertaking, and in the laudable zeal with which she entered upon it, her charitable intentions toward her orphan cousins were soon forgotten.

ROSA BLAKE AND HER LOVERS.

BY CARRY STANLEY, AUTHOR OF "ADA LESTER'S SEASON IN NEW YORK."

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 149.

CHAPTER X.

THE bright summer days passed wearily to Rosa. She never saw Anderson now except by accident, in the company of others, or at meeting, and then their recognition could only be a distant one.

Farmer Blake sighed, and his heart smote him many a time, when he noticed his daughter's altered demeanor; for she went about the house in a quiet, abstracted manner, performing even more than her ordinary duties, but not with the bounding step, and gay laugh, and merry song of old. So the good man would make a pretext to go to the next town, and bring from thence such flaming dresses and gilded books as would make poor Rosa smile through her tears, as she received them. Even strong-hearted Mrs. Blake was softened, though she did not choose to acknowledge it, except by reproving her daughter less than formerly; but her manner totally ignored the existence of Anderson.

As for Mr. Johnson, he condescendingly overlooked the blackberry episode, since his rival had been removed out of his way, and began to patronize Rosa, as he thought one of his superior merits should. So the summer evenings found him in his second-best linen coat, talking over the crops with Mr. Blake, or the best method of drying peaches, or making potatoe starch with the dame, and ogling Rosa till the poor girl loathed him from the bottom of her heart. Even at meeting she was not freed from his impertinence, for if her eyes were fixed on the minister, she felt that she was being stared at so by Joe that the attention of the whole congregation must be called to it. Sunday afternoon's, too, usually found him, tilted back on the two hind-feet of his chair, at Mr. Blake's tea-table, touching Rosa's foot, if he could reach it, with his own, till she was sometimes inclined to repeat the lesson which she had given him when the barn was raised.

One day, he appeared on the piazza, where Rosa was reading, more radiant than usual. Farmer Blake sat, with newspaper in hand, appearing to be studying politics, but really

thinking of his daughter's altered manner, when Mr. Johnson entered.

"We're going to get up a huckleberry party to the Pines," said the visitor, "you'll go, of course, neighbor Blake; us fellows settled it all to-day, after meeting, and I spoke for Rosy, here. I'm to take her in my wagon."

Rose closed her book, and with flashing eyes, face and neck crimson, and voice fairly quivering with passion, answered,

"You were never more mistaken in your life. I *will not* go with you. I don't see how you dare—"

"Rosa, for shame," said Mrs. Blake, looking up from Fox's Book of Martyrs, the wonderful incidents and pictures of which had been her Sunday's recreation for the last year.

"No, no," interrupted the farmer, "I think if we go, Rose had better go with us. There'll be plenty of room in our wagon, thank you, Mr. Johnson."

"But that'll spoil all the fun," replied Joe, in a disappointed tone, "each of us fellows was to take a girl in a fast team, and the old folks was to jog along as they pleased, and bring the fodder. Don't let Rosy spoil it all, Mrs. Blake."

"She'll go with you, Mr. Johnson, I guess; she's only bashful," but as the mother said this she glanced at her daughter, not at all sure of what she said.

Rosa, who had resumed her book, though she was too angry to know a word she was reading, replied,

"If father goes, and will take me, I'll go, but I *won't* go with anybody else."

"Then you should stay at home, if I was your father," retorted Mrs. Blake, angrily,

"I'm willing, I'm sure," was the sullen reply of Rosa.

Joe looked bewildered, and Mr. Blake said, soothingly,

"If the child likes her own father and mother better'n anybody else, we oughtn't to find fault with her, I'm sure, mother. If she wants to go with us, why let her go. There are plenty of girls that'll be *glad* to jump at the chance of going with Mr. Johnson, even if she is so foolish as to refuse."

The tears were coming into Rosa's eyes at her father's kindness, so she did not dare to look up, but she drew nearer to him, and he patted her kindly on the head, and said,

"You think more of your old father yet, than you do of any of these young hop-o'-my-thumbs, don't you, daughter?"

"But I don't know what I'm to do," commenced Joe. "I said I was going to take Rosy, and each fellow chose his girl, and there isn't one left."

"Ask our Susan," said Rosa, for her natural spirits had somewhat revived since she found her father was inclined to protect her, and she thought she would have a chance of seeing Mark.

But Joe muttered between his teeth, "Damn Susan;" and Mrs. Blake said, in a low voice, as she passed where Rosa was sitting, "Young lady, if you don't behave yourself, you'll stay at home yet."

So the huckleberry party was arranged to take place on the ensuing Thursday.

Mrs. Blake, who prided herself on being the best cook and most notable housekeeper in the county, was determined not to be outdone in her preparations for the pic-nic. With a pleased smile she drew her baking from the huge mouthed brick oven. Hard ginger-bread and soft ginger-bread; beautifully browned sponge-cake and crisp jumbles; white potatoe custards "that one couldn't tell from real lemon," she averred; and cocoa-nut custards with their flaky crust. Then there were famous loaves of bread, and chickens roasted to be eaten cold.

Mr. Blake stood and watched all these being stored away in tubs and baskets, together with papers of tea, coffee and sugar, and jars of pickles and preserves, and pots of golden butter, and uncooked chickens to be barbecued or fricaseed, to be served up hot; and he said that she had "enough to feed the whole Rooshan army."

"Sammy Blake, when I do a thing, I do it," was the answer of the dame, "none of your half work for me; I do hate this scrimping and screwing way some people, I could name, has. Beuly Roberts thinks nobody can get up a thing of this kind but her, but if anybody 'll beat my baking, or set a finer chicken on the table than this, why I'll just let 'em; that's all," and Mrs. Blake remorselessly doubled the chicken's legs under it, and fitted it into its place in the tub.

"I don't see how in the world all these things is to go in the little wagon, and three people beside," said the husband at last.

"Then Rosa can go with Joe Johnson. He's

got nobody yet, and would jump at it," was the reply.

"I tell you, mother, that won't do. I promised the child she should go with us, and so she shall, if she wants to, if I have to take the heavy wagon. Besides, she's got a spirit of her own, and we ain't gitting along any faster, for forcing things too much. Maybe she'll come around by-and-bye if we leave her be. I hope so, I'm sure," and Mr. Blake sighed as he turned away, and thought of the meadow.

Mrs. Blake would have replied, but her thoughts were occupied just then as to the best method of carrying a bottle of cream without breaking, so her husband was saved her opinion upon the subject.

CHAPTER XI.

THE stars were still out, and the moon shining brightly, when the Blakes started, before day-break, on their excursion. The old-fashioned huckleberry parties, it is true, were nearly done away, when each person waded in the swamp for the luscious fruit, and the smartest picker drove exultingly homeward with well filled tubs and baskets; most now preferring to purchase of poor people in the vicinity, who made their livelihood by it; but there were some industrious men like farmer Blake, who looked upon a day of mere pleasure as the greatest toil possible, who still persisted in getting the berries as they had done when they were boys; and beginning their day of relaxation as early as they would a day of hard labor. Then too it was a drive of sixteen miles, the latter part of which was through heavy sands, and had to be accomplished before the sun was too high.

So, as we said before, the stars were still out, and the moon still up, when the Blakes set off for the place of *rendezvous*, some five miles distant. As they rode along, the silence would occasionally be broken by a blast from one of the long tin horns, without which no party to the Pines is complete, and directly, emerging from a cross road, or coming up furiously behind them, a wagon would appear, full of people in the gayest spirits. As they neared the place of meeting, there were answering notes in every direction; a few airs really well played by aspiring musicians; whilst some, who cared more for fun than sentiment, sent out prolonged groans through the long-throated horns, or used them as speaking trumpets much to the annoyance of the musical swains. But soon the sound of a violin was heard, and the horns became as dumb as common birds do in the presence of the

nightingale; and now a rough, broad wagon appeared, crowded with merry young fellows, and in their midst old black Guy, head and foot keeping time to the music, as he played away for dear life, "The Campbells are Coming."

Amid all the gay jests and laughter, Rosa listened in vain for Mark's voice, and with a feeling of disappointment she drew back in the wagon.

"We're all here now, I believe," said one of the young men at last, "except Joe Johnson and Rosa Blake. Why didn't you make 'em keep up with you, neighbor Blake?"

"I am here," answered Rosa, energetically, as she put her head out of the wagon.

"Why I thought—but here he comes now," replied the speaker, as a crack of a whip was heard, and Joe swept in among the assembled wagons with the dexterity of a practised Jehu.

"Smart work that, boys," said he, as he drew his horses in with so sudden a jerk as almost threw them on their haunches, "I drove them five miles in twenty minutes, easy."

"Better make it fifteen, Joe, for short," called out some one from the broad wagon, who was well acquainted with Joe's boastful propensities.

"And the wagon run so easy that that hardly swung an inch from its place," Joe went on without noticing the interruption, and pointed in to a huge glass horn suspended from the top of the vehicle, the triumphant achievement of some fanciful glass-blower.

The stars were dying out one by one, and the moonlight was feebly struggling with the conquering dawn, when the party were again on their way.

Farmer Blake's wagon was one of the first to reach the place of destination, and when the others came up Mrs. Blake had already unpacked her tubs and baskets, and began to make preparations for breakfast.

The miller who owned the property derived a snug little revenue from hiring out a long, board building which he had erected, and which answered the purpose of dining-room and ball-room; and here empty barrels, supporting rough boards, serving for tables, the breakfast was spread.

The younger part of the company wandered away in search of amusement, longing for nothing but breakfast to be over, but dinner also, so that old Guy and the dancing might begin.

Rosa had been more gratified than her mother was, by seeing Mark Anderson assist Mrs. Robert from the wagon, and Mrs. Blake was kept in a state of perpetual irritation the whole morning, notwithstanding her triumph over "Beuly

Roberts," by the remarks made to her by her friends respecting Rosa and her lovers.

"So she's given Josy Johnson the mitten, I see," said one.

"The schoolmaster is as fine a young man as you'll see in a day's walk; it's a pity he's poor," added another, who knew Mrs. Blake's weak points exactly.

So the good woman was in no amiable mood when she saw Rosa and Anderson returning from a walk together.

"You're making yourself the talk of the whole company by your conduct," whispered the mother, angrily, as her daughter approached her.

"Why, I've only been down to the swing where all the others are," was the reply.

"Very well; but remember that you don't put your foot in a boat to-day, if you go with Mark Anderson."

Rosa did not dare to disobey her mother, and this was a grievous disappointment to her, for she had just told Mark that she would go in his boat to hunt for water lilies. So she went down to the edge of the pond, where a large party were waiting for the boats to be unmoored, and stood looking silently on.

"Come, jump in, Rosa," said Anderson, taking her by the arm.

The girl's eyes filled with tears as she shook her head in the negative, saying in an under tone,

"I can't, Mark, mother says I shan't go with you."

"She will let you go in one of the other boats, won't she?" queried Anderson, as he stooped down to unfasten the chain.

"But I don't want to," replied Rosa. There were but two boats left, the one which Mark was to row, and another of which Joe Johnson took possession.

"Come, Rosy," said Joe, at this moment, "your mother sent me to take care of you; jump in, quick, or the others'll get the start of us."

But Rosa still refused, notwithstanding that the young girls in the boat kept calling to her and making room. Joe was growing impatient. Finding that she would be the only one left behind, she was about turning away to join the matrons, who were in high preparations for dinner, when Mark called out,

"Come, Miss Rosa, you know I promised to get you some water lilies."

"I guess I can get them for her without your help," muttered Joe, as Rosa at last took her seat in the boat.

CHAPTER XII.

THE party sped gaily up the lake, the musical voices of the girls keeping time to the dipping oars. On either side the tall pine forest rose, dense and green, blackening the water's edge as it looked into it with its dark face, a drooping birch tree or alder bush, with their more vivid color springing up like a smile, now and then; whilst further out, the deep, blue waters reposed calmly beneath the deeper blue of the summer sky.

As they advanced the view became wilder. Gaunt old trees, on which not a vestige of foliage remained, were draped in long moss, hanging in fantastic folds from their branches nearly to their feet; and there they stood, as they had stood for years, biding "the pelting of the pitiless storm," their wrinkled arms thrown aloft, their grey beards tossing in the wind like some dethroned old Lear.

Great beds of snowy water lilies floated on the lake; clumps of bushes sprung up in the midst of the water, forming green islands; stalwart trees, that for many generations had shaken their hoary heads at Time, had at last succumbed before the conqueror, weary of the conflict, and laid them down quietly in the blue waters.

The party had grown more silent as they proceeded. At last Anderson said,

"There are too many snags and fallen trees here for it to be quite safe. Suppose we take the ladies back to the rock, and leave them, and return for the lilies by ourselves."

The proposition was readily agreed to, the more especially, as it had been impossible for several of the girls to repress a scream, as the bottom of the boat grated over hidden stumps and branches.

So the boats turned and sped rapidly back. Rosa gave a sigh of relief when they were all safely landed on the rock.

"I'm so glad we are here," said she to Anderson, who was helping the girls from the boats. "It was such a wild-looking place in spite of the water lilies. Wouldn't it have been horrible to have been drowned there? Everything so still, except the crows that wheel and 'caw' over the waters, or the dreadful moaning of the wind through the trees."

Mark turned and looked at her, and her cheeks and lips were ashy from emotion.

"I know it's very foolish," said she, trying to laugh, "for there's not a bit of danger, but I wish you were not going back."

"Not a bit of danger," answered Anderson, as

he sprang into the boat after his companions and pushed off.

The quick strokes of his oars soon put him alongside the other boats, but he observed that Johnson strained every nerve to keep ahead. A feeling of good-natured rivalry induced him to put forth all his skill, and he soon shot past Johnson. The young men who were with him gave a shout as they glided onward, leaving the two other boats behind, and Joe again bent to his oars, till the perspiration stood in great drops on his flushed face.

The beds of water lilies were soon reached, and the bottoms of the boats strewn with the gleaming white flowers.

"There's something I must get," said Anderson, pointing to a spike of crimson blossoms that grew near to the shore.

"I saw them before you spoke, and intended to have them myself for Rosa Blake," said Joe; but Mark was already steering in the direction of the prize.

With a suppressed oath, Joe shot his boat alongside of Anderson's. Mark, with one oar stuck in the ground to steady himself by, was already leaning forward, with his hand almost on the flower, when Johnson took one of his sculls, and pushed it against his rival's boat with such force that it swerved around in an opposite direction, Anderson lost his balance, and in a moment was buried in the blue waters.

The oppressive silence of the summer's day was unbroken save by the splash of the falling body. Every tongue seemed paralyzed with terror. In an instant a white face appeared on the water, made more ghastly by the frightful wound on the temple.

"I didn't do it," muttered Johnson, between his chattering teeth, as he gazed with distended eyes and a face almost as livid as the one which gleamed on him so reproachfully from the water.

But already they were lifting the body in one of the boats.

"I didn't do it, but I can't row," said Johnson, again, and he covered down in the bottom of his boat, not daring to look on the white upturned face of his rival; and his hands shook like those of a palsied old man.

Without a word of comment, one of his companion's took the oars and turned homeward, and the two other boats speedily followed.

The stillness was horrible. Nothing was heard but the "caw, caw," of the solitary crow that wheeled and circled down the lake. The light breeze that kissed the water lilies brought no responses from them, and the summer sun beat down unpitifully on the rigid features of Anderson.

The girls, who were waiting impatiently for the return of the boats, at last heard the dipping of the oars.

Rosa leaned forward anxiously to catch a first glimpse of the party as they came around the point. But to the astonishment of all, the first boat flew past; then some one called from it,

"Mark Anderson is drowned!"

The bright, eager faces grew livid; a short, stifled cry was heard in the midst; and Rosa Blake sunk to the ground.

The terrified girls called in vain to be taken into the boat, and when the next one rounded the point two or three cried out,

"You must take us in; Rosa Blake is dying."

With increased terror, at this new misfortune, the young men ran the boat silently up to the landing-place, helped to lift in Rosa's insensible form, took as many more as they could possibly carry, and then put off again.

The young girls cuddled together on the water's edge, in horror-struck silence, and saw them bear Anderson past.

"Don't forget to come back for us," at last called out one, who recovered her faculties sooner than the others. A nod from the rower was the only answer, and then they were left alone.

With dropping tears, Rosa's companions bathed her face, and endeavored to recover her from her death-like swoon.

"She's dying on the very lilies that Mark took so much pains to get, and I know they were for her," said one of the young men, in a whisper; and in the same low voice he gave the girls an account of the catastrophe.

"Do you think he is really dead, or only stunned?" asked one.

"Dead. He struck his temple against something when he went down—a stump, most likely," and the speaker again applied himself vigorously to the oars.

CHAPTER XIII.

The tin horns were sending out a merry summons to dinner to all stragglers and delinquents, when the first boat arrived at the landing.

One of the young men sprang ashore, and imparted the dreadful news. The crowd that was hastening toward the mill with jest and laughter, stopped suddenly, gazed in each other's face for a moment, in blank dismay, smiles and words freezing on their lips, then turned and hastened precipitately to the water's edge.

By this time the second boat had arrived. "It isn't Anderson, it's Rosa Blake," exclaimed

some one, as the girl's insensible form was lifted out.

"Not my Rosy—you don't mean my Rosy?" and the speaker parted the crowd of people that were looking on in breathless silence.

"She aint dead, I don't believe, Mr. Blake, only swooned-like," said a motherly-looking old lady, as the poor, bewildered father tried to take Rosa up in his arms. But he trembled so he was obliged to let some one stronger than he carry her to the mill, and walked beside her, holding her cold hands, whilst the tears streamed silently down his sun-burned, furrowed face.

Mrs. Blake, who had been engaged in putting the dinner on the table, was starting out to see the cause of the delay, when she met them bearing in Rosa.

"What's the matter? what is the matter?" asked the poor woman, giving strong symptoms of hysterics.

"Don't take on so, Mrs. Blake, she'll soon come to; she only fainted when she heard Mark Anderson was drowned," said one of the young men, as they carried her into the miller's house, and laid her on a settee.

But neither father nor mother seemed to heed the fate of Anderson. They only thought of their daughter laying there apparently dead, for it seemed impossible to arouse her from that terrible syncope.

The people who had collected around Rosa, swayed back for a moment, to gaze with horror on Anderson, as he was carried through the room to a bed in the adjoining one.

"He aint dead yet, but dreadfully stunned. Cale Thompson's geering up Johnson's horses to go post-haste for the doctor," replied one of the men, in answer to Mrs. Roberts' inquiries.

But the good woman shook her head.

"He'll die from loss of blood, if that ain't stopped," and with skilful hands she commenced applying all the remedies at her command.

"And Rosa Blake, too! How did it all happen?" she said, as she clipped off the soft, brown hair, dabbled with blood, from the wounded temple.

With some difficulty, the true version of the story was arrived at; but Johnson had escaped from the many indignant glances, which would have been cast upon him, by going himself for the doctor.

Long before the physician appeared, Mark had been divested of his wet clothing, the room closed, and Mrs. Roberts installed as his nurse. The wound was pronounced a most dangerous one, yet there was hope sufficient given to war-rant Jane Thompson whispering in Rosa's ear,

"Mark wasn't drowned, Rosa, and the doctor says he thinks he'll soon be better."

But the intelligence had no effect on the poor girl. Two or three times she had opened her eyes, looked languidly, unconsciously around, then relapsed into her former insensibility.

Mrs. Blake seemed nearly frantic. She wrung her hands and sobbed so violently that the physician, who had been called in after seeing Mark, was obliged to have her taken from the room.

Mr. Blake sat beside his daughter, kissing her cold hands, and chafing them between his own; tears raining down his face, as he called her his "dear little Rosy." Then a gust of weeping seemed to shake his frame, and he would lay his wet cheek against her own, and stroke her hair, as he endeavored to choke down his sobs.

But at last consciousness returned. With a bewildered look, Rosa glanced from one to another of those who were standing around, and at last it rested on the anxious face of her father. She gazed at him steadily for a moment, as if endeavoring to recall something, then she cried out,

"Mark."

It seemed as if her heart had broken with her cry.

"Don't, don't now, Rosy! Oh, she's dead," exclaimed the poor man, endeavoring to rouse her again.

Sobs were heard in every part of the room, the father's grief was so terrible.

The kind physician administered restoratives, with tearful eyes. He comprehended the case at once, and as soon as he saw consciousness again returning, he said,

"Mark will soon be well, Rosa."

She seemed to gather all her faculties for the one word, "drowned!"

"No he wasn't at all. All a mistake," replied the good doctor, quickly.

Old Guy's services were not needed that day. The young people, with whom Mark was so popular, could not dance while even yet it was doubtful if he would recover; and the girls scattered about in groups, whispered over the romance, and gave their whole sympathies, as girls will, to the lovers.

The party, which was to have returned by moonlight, had no heart for festivities now, so they prepared to leave early in the afternoon. As for Joe Johnson, after bringing the doctor, and giving no very lucid explanation of the affair, he had quietly departed long before.

Mrs. Blake, her fears for her daughter being over, was bustling about as energetically as ever,

seeing that things were being stowed away in their proper places in the wagon.

"Come, Rosy, you're as weak as a kitten; let me help you, we're all ready," said the father, as he went to the settee where his daughter was lying.

"I can't go away and leave Mark here, all alone; maybe he'll die," sobbed the poor girl, nervously.

"Why the doctor said he'd soon get well, you know, and Benlah Roberts is going to stay to take care of him," answered Mr. Blake.

"Can't I see him, just for a moment? I won't speak," pleaded Rosa, with her head on her father's shoulder.

Mr. Blake was dreadfully perplexed. He thought it inadmissible on both Anderson's and his daughter's account, if the former was awake and conscious, and he sincerely wished his energetic wife, on whose quick mind he had been too much accustomed to rely, was present. So he replied soothingly,

"Well, let us wait till mother comes."

But Rosa shook her head, and made an effort to reach the door. It was well her father accompanied her, for she gave one look at the white face and still form lying on the bed, then trying to cross the room to where Anderson lay, she groaned out, "Oh, he's dead, and you wouldn't tell me."

Mrs. Blake was called in from her preparations to help recover Rosa from another swoon, and she rated her husband soundly, as she bathed her daughter's face, for permitting her to see Anderson.

That night the anxious father was awakened from his sleep by a shriek from his daughter's room. He aroused his wife, and hurried in to find Rosa sitting up in bed, raving in her delirium, that Mark was drowned away up in the lonely pond.

It was many days before Rosa was conscious again. Mrs. Blake had been thoroughly subdued by her daughter's sufferings, and was the first to inform her that Mark was slowly but surely recovering.

"We shall have to look out for a new school-master soon," said Mr. Blake, one day at dinner.

The roses which were beginning to revisit Rosa's cheeks paled again at the announcement. She cast a startled, inquiring glance at her father, who continued,

"As soon as Anderson is strong enough, he is going to P—— to study for the ministry," but he did not add that he had voluntarily offered him enough money to defray all his expenses.

This offer, Mark at first peremptorily refused,

but he was not proof against the tempting inducements with which good farmer Blake wound it up.

"Take the money," said he, "and get through your studies. Then come back and settle among us, if you can; and if Rosa and you continue in the same mind till then, why, I guess mother and me won't be very hard to coax."

CHAPTER XIV.

It was a sweet Sabbath morning in May. Half an hour before the wagon was ready, Rosa was dressed and pulling on her gloves, pacing up and down the sitting-room, in a restless but happy state of mind. And when they started for meeting, her heart beat so rebelliously that she had to press her hand to her side to quiet it.

Good farmer Blake's eyes had a suspicious moisture over them as he handed his daughter from the wagon, and his wife gathered her new silk shawl around her with inimitable dignity, as she nodded condescendingly to one neighbor and another; for was not Mark Anderson, the new minister—who had "received a call" to fill the place of their old pastor, just laid down in the green grave-yard—to be her son-in-law?

Rosa took her seat with a blushing cheek, and silent, happy tears trickled down her face. She was not even conscious that she was sitting next to Joe Johnson's flashy bride, glorious as a poppy in the bright hues of her changeable silk dress, and her ribbons, and her veil, and her soiled white gloves. She little heeded that Joe now looked upon her in supreme disdain as he compared her with his city wife, who made her appearance to-day, for the first time, at the quiet meeting-house. She felt as if her heart was almost bursting with its glad song of thanksgiving.

The wonderful stillness which reigned over the congregation, during Mark's first sermon, was the most flattering tribute which could have been paid him, and as the dames wiped their eyes, and their sturdy husbands drew the backs of

their hands across their own, at the end of the last prayer, they pronounced the young minister "a second Daniel come to judgment," and prophesied such revivals as had never been known before.

Mrs. Blake declared to Mrs. Thompson that it was the most wonderful sermon she had ever heard; though it must be confessed that during part of it, she had been calculating how many yards of carpeting the three barrels of carpet-rag-balls, which were stored away in the garret, would make, and whether as Rosa was to be a minister's wife, her linen sheeting should not be a little finer than her own.

Throughout the whole summer, Mrs. Blake and her daughter were making mysterious trips to the city, and nearly every week farmer Blake's heavy wagon would return from the steamboat landing loaded with baskets of rattling china and thumping cooking utensils, and huge bundles of dry-goods, that would make the lookers on stare as they saw them piled in; for as Mrs. Blake had said on a former occasion, "when she did a thing, she *did* it, and no half way work for her;" and she was determined that Rosa's future home should be as complete as the good farmer's well filled purse could make it.

But one thing through all the pleasant bustle of preparation discomposed Mrs. Blake. It was that Rosa, in spite of all remonstrance, insisted upon being married in a plain white dress of thin muslin, instead of the glittering silk which her mother had bought for her to outrival Mrs. Johnson's. But the good dame had to acknowledge, when she looked in from her extraordinary efforts for supper, and saw Jane Thompson fasten the last cluster of white tea-roses in her daughter's hair, that "after all, the bride couldn't be beat."

The week of festivity, which Mrs. Blake kept up with such untiring vigor, was rather irksome to Rosa, who longed to escape from it all to her cozy, pleasant little home, near the church, where she still lives a happy, young mother, looked up to by all the congregation as the honored wife of their beloved pastor.

THE LITTLE TOY-MAKER.

BY A. L. OTIS.

In this city, which seems to a stranger passing along the streets, fair and open as the day, there are nevertheless nooks and corners, as full of romance and mystery as an old German castle. With one of the least out-of-the-way of these, this tale has to do.

A young gentleman, of handsome and fashionable bearing, was passing down Market street, about a month before Christmas, when he suddenly stopped before a gorgeous toy-shop, and looked in at the window with a new and smiling interest. He had that morning been made an uncle.

"It is of no use getting anything for present use," he muttered, "but her first Christmas must not pass unnoticed."

So he stepped into the store, and began an amused examination of its contents, but wanted something more beautiful than anything there.

"Step below, sir, and you will find the finest assortment of freshly imported goods in the city," said the hurried store-keeper, and our friend, Mr. Frank — did as he was desired.

After passing through the recesses of the dark store, he reached a narrow, precipitous staircase. Having descended, he felt as if one of the genii of the Arabian Nights had suddenly transported him to some strange land underground, some gnomes' cave, heaped with fantastic treasures, and sunk in enchanted silence. The gas-light, however, brought the staring masks and stark dolls into relief from the many-tinted confusion of the crowded walls. The long room seemed left to its own gloomy solitude, and the young man paused at the entrance, to let his fancy play awhile with the strange effect of the scene, coming suddenly, as he did, from the noise and snowy glare of the street. Suddenly, among the heap of toys in the centre of the room, directly under the light, he perceived a quick movement, and from what he might have taken for a pale mask two gleaming eyes looked upon him. He was startled for a moment, not seeing whether those eyes were in their proper face, and not being able to trace any human figure below them. He advanced, bewildered, but curious, and perceived, as soon as he had passed the intervening objects, that no supernatural being was present, though he could

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easily have persuaded himself the little individual before him was an old gnome. The small, shrunk figure and withered face, the very large head and rolling eyes, the little, red jacket, and deft, long-nailed fingers made the resemblance perfect. But it was only a child, with a grotesque, but thoughtful and intelligent face.

As Frank advanced, he was greeted in a business-like manner by the little fellow, who asked if he could show him anything, springing, as he said so, down from the high counting-house stool upon which he was perched before a desk or high table. As he sprang, the rotary swing of his arms, and, indeed, all his motions were as elf-like as his appearance. When he walked among the toys, he seemed to have little control of his limbs, often being obliged to dance across the room, and back, at a sharp angle, in order to reach any particular place to which he wished to go. Meanwhile he talked incessantly of the toys, describing their various beauties with enthusiasm, and laughing immoderately at those intended as surprises.

After one of these bursts of mirth, he suddenly asked if it was the gentleman's intention to purchase *anything*, for Frank, out of a wish to prolong his stay, had asked the price of innumerable articles.

"Yes," answered Frank, "and you shall help me to decide. What would be a suitable present to give a little maiden only a month old at Christmas? I want something that will please her in future, something very beautiful—not so fantastic as most of these toys, and not so common as a wax doll."

"Ah," said the child, leaning his head to one side, and peering into the ceiling, "I must think! What do you say to a fairy-land? Oh, if I could only get an order for a fairy-land!"

"What is it, my boy?"

"Oh, its only an idea that I have got, but I have always wanted to make it since I first read a fairy tale. If you don't mind expense, it shall be done by Christmas."

"But tell me, what is your idea?"

"Oh, a charming, sunny garden, filled with flowers and trees, and little wax fairies, troops of them. Also, a dark grotto, lit by festoons of fireflies, with little elves peeping out; to be made

in perspective, and looked at through a little hole fitted with a magnifying-glass. If you don't like it, when done, you could buy something else, only then you would have to pay for both. So, I say, if you don't mind expense, give the order to Mr. —, up stairs, and I'll have it done in time."

Frank could afford to gratify a whim, so he gave the boy the longed-for permission, and was much surprised to see the wandering gait and vacillating look change for a quick, alert step and earnest, keen glance, as he sought for tools to begin at once.

Frank spoke to the owner of the establishment, and learned that the boy was fourteen years old, though his diminutive stature made him seem scarce half that age. He had been in his present employ four years, and was a most skilful workman, though afflicted with St. Vitus' dance; but whenever he was doing anything that interested him, every trace of his malady vanished, and his hand was as steady as cunning in its workmanship. That cellar was his world. He never wished to leave it. He often staid all night, sleeping on the floor, among the toys, and his leisure hours were passed there, reading fairy tales, though he had a home, and helped generously to support three sisters and a brother.

Much interested in the boy, Frank determined to wean him from this self-destroying mode of life, and under pretence of seeing the progress of the toy, he often visited the under-ground store-room. Jerome was always perched on his high stool, working with a concentrated eagerness that made him generally quite unconscious of anything Frank could do to gain his attention. Nevertheless, as his lonely heart had inclined to love Frank, from the moment he had read his kindly and interested glance, he would sometimes be won from his work, and resting his elbows on his desk, and his eyes on Frank's face, talk volubly awhile, of his dreams mostly, though something of his real life was mingled with them.

There was one person especially whom he often mentioned, and Frank was puzzled to know whether she were a creature of his brain, or some lovely reality. Celeste, he called her, and from his scraps of description, she was beautiful as a houri, and as houris are beautiful, with large, soft yet glowing, dark eyes, heavy, silky and free curls, carnation cheeks, a sweet voice and a marvellous grace, that the boy was beside himself in describing. Frank could not make out whether she were a lady, or a little girl, Jerome's sister, or some benefactress to his family, or an angel-visitant to his dreams.

He asked questions, but when Jerome was in a talking humor he seemed to improvise, and Frank could never interrupt the thread of his narrative. When he resumed his labors, his answers, if he gave any, were always monosyllables, and generally spoken at random, so that if the same question were asked twice he was pretty sure to contradict himself. Frank's curiosity, whether intentionally, or otherwise, was completely baffled.

On Christmas Eve, Frank went, as he had promised Jerome, to take a final look at his finished toy, and having forced his way through the thronged upper-store, stood in the obscurity of the entrance to the lower, almost ready again to fancy it an enchanted place, and himself under the influence of fairy spells, for leaning over the gnome's shoulder was the most lovely head he ever beheld, and he instantly recognized Jerome's houri. The drop-light, which Jerome's work required, shone upon the full, white forehead, from which dark, luxuriant curls fell to shade her young neck and shoulders. The same light gave a brilliancy to her lips, and a shadow to her drooped eyelashes that made her picture richer than imagination could paint.

Frank half believed it an illusion, especially as he saw not a trace of such drapery as winter requires of mortals, only below the shoulders two little lace sleeves that might have expanded into gauze wings, without being much of a surprise to him. Below the shoulder the figure was hid by the gnome and desk.

Frank's curiosity was now of so pleasurable a kind, that he would not destroy it by gratification, lest he should also cause the destruction of what he believed the realization of his beau ideal. At the hasty approach of a step on the stairs, the beautiful apparition did really disappear suddenly, and though Frank darted forward in pursuit of it, he only ran against rocking-horses, and overthrew some heaps of smaller toys, without discovering anything. At this the goblin at the desk shrieked shrilly with laughter, but Frank could bear it with philosophy, since at the same time he gained a clue to the mystery in the over-excited words of the boy.

"So you thought to catch Celeste? She and I have our hiding-places. Why she has been in this room half a dozen times when you have been here, and when you go away we laugh at the questions you ask about her. She likes this fairy-land very much, and she made these little artificial trees and blooming plants. Her mother makes artificial flowers, and teaches dancing up stairs. Celeste is a fairy herself. How she floats when she dances! All the fairies in the world

are not so beautiful. She is so kind to little me. But I love her, and she only pays me back. Those that I love she loves—I love you. Yes, Mr. Frank, I love you!"

The mildly excited face subsided as he said this into an indescribably cunning expression. Frank wondered at the glow he felt spreading from his own heart. He wished to question Jerome, but feared the beautiful eaves-dropper. With cool impudence, however, he risked the consequences, and said,

"Do you wish me to think Celeste loves me?"

"Yes. She told me you were too handsome for anything. And that she came here only to see you," cried the boy, almost choking with laughter.

He had not finished speaking, before, from beneath a huge drum, up sprang a very beautiful and angry young lady—of sixteen summers, and all a woman's feelings—who ejaculated with a flash of her indignant orbs,

"You little story-teller," and then turned with some dignity to Frank, saying,

"He does this to tease me. He is taking his revenge for my being caught here. He it is who always makes me hide. I never laughed at any thing you ever said, and as to what else he says you know it must be false!"

"I hope not," Frank muttered, unconsciously, and continued only to gaze. Celeste thought he meant he hoped Jerome was not such a story-teller.

"But he shall own the truth. Take back every word, Jerome, instantly. I don't know that I shall ever come to see you again, but certainly if you don't recant, you shall never see me dance again."

The boy turned deadly pale, and lost all childishness, in what seemed like angry suspicion and cunning.

"Why are you so angry then?" he said. "Why do you care to justify yourself to Mr. Frank? Why not take it all as a joke? Because you do love him. You know it!"

"Jerome, silence!" cried Celeste, stamping her foot, and unable to say more for the grieved swelling of her heart.

It troubled Jerome to see this, and assuming his childish privileges, he, from his high seat, threw his arms round her neck, and burst into tears as he kissed her cheek, saying,

"No, no, dear Celeste, you never said a word of it all, and you don't love him. If I thought you did, or cared for him more than for me, I should hate him, and I don't—I like him."

"Well, then, get down and let me be," said the forgiving girl, gently, pressing his little dirty

hand, "I forgive you, and you may come up now and see me dance, for I hear the music beginning."

Panting with joy the boy scrambled down.

"Will you allow me the pleasure too?" asked Frank.

But all her resentment seemed transferred to him, for she gave him a haughty and reluctant permission, as if to refuse were making the matter of too much consequence.

They all ascended three flights of stairs, and arrived at the dancing-room, where the scholars and their friends were assembled, forming a not very numerous or fashionable company; for Celeste's mother, the widow of a French officer, once highly connected, but now shorn of all relations by the revolution, was of too gentle and timid a spirit to push her way to fashionable distinction. Bread, by any independent means attained, was her only object.

After the tedious schooling by madame, Celeste concluded the evening by dancing some sylphide or fancy dance, in which she seemed scarcely to exert herself, but to be gently borne about in the most graceful attitudes by the very lightness of her dress and nature.

The boy looked on with parted lips and quickly flushing cheek. His suppressed excitement was so intense as to seize the looker-on, and hurry his feelings to the same pitch. Frank, interested in looking at him, notwithstanding his wish not to lose a movement of Celeste's, saw that half his childishness was assumed, that he was capable of deeper feelings than he, Frank, had ever supposed, and that as a lover he loved Celeste as a secluded, enthusiastic, concentrative nature alone can love. He thought mournfully of the certain misery in store for the poor boy.

When, after his long observation of Jerome's strange face and uncouth movements, he turned once more to Celeste, the union of beauty, grace, and harmony filled him with ecstasy. He could no longer turn his deeply appreciating gaze from her, and she felt its power. She did not apply its flattery to herself, but to her art, and it encouraged, it filled her with enthusiasm. She became a gentle, fervid, impassioned impersonation of the poet's dream who dreamed that dance, for none but a pure-minded poet in his visions of angels could have imagined it.

For many months after this, Frank never missed a dancing evening. His friendliness always made him a way wherever he wished to go, and he was welcomed by the mother, and not frowned upon by the daughter, though Celeste's timidity only increased while his childishness vanished.

Frank's half weekly visits produced one sad result. Jerome, instead of enjoying the dancing, watched Frank keenly, bitterly, savagely. Nor was it long before his quick eye found occasion to watch Celeste also, for she no longer danced for the improvement of the pupils; it was for the pleasure she and Mr. Frank took in it, she, in the pleasure of music, inspired motion and his appreciation, he, in that appreciation. Frequently Celeste only danced with the children, leading them lovingly, pointing her pretty foot to show the right position, and with the sweetest patience repeating the same reproof a thousand times. Though Frank's heart did not beat so wildly as he left the room after such an evening, his judgment and his sense of the beautiful were not the less gratified. He dreamed on such nights of a peaceful, loving home, brightened with the grace of tender motherhood.

Frank had yet two more interesting tableaux to witness—but as these much more nearly concerned himself he was not so cool a spectator. He came early one rainy night, and as he stopped at the door to remove his overshoes, having made, as he supposed, noise enough coming up stairs to announce his arrival, he heard Celeste remonstrating in a low, earnest tone of entreaty, then heard her mother reply,

"I ask him what he come for here. I do, I must. I am your mother. If he say, 'nothink,' I say 'go in time.' If he say 'marriage,' I say 'what settlement?' and if all is right I say, 'take my daughter.' It is good. I will do it. This an every day affair, my daughter."

Again a sob, and piteous entreaties, made Frank retreat hastily toward the stairs, when he met two pupils, who, he knew, would enter immediately after removing their wrappings. He thought it best to be first, and though it was not customary, he knocked before entering. His knock was unheard, and when he appeared at the door, Celeste, who was kneeling by her mother, with her head on her lap, sprang to her feet, reeled and fainted. She fell against her mother, who supported her while Frank sprang to lock the door. Then lifting the light, girlish form as he would an infant, he placed her on the sofa, and, with his arms still encircling her, knelt beside it, in too much fear and anxiety to notice the exquisite beauty of the statue he held.

Her mother was searching for salts, but before she arrived Celeste began to murmur painfully, while large tears rolled down her cheeks.

"Do not be troubled, Celeste," Frank whispered: then afraid of betraying his knowledge of their conversation, he said, "oh, Celeste, I love

you, I love you. Why have the words not sprung from my lips a thousand times before?"

More he could not add, for madame advanced with her salts, and requested him to move away.

"Let me stay till I hear my fate," he said. "Your daughter's next word may decide its happiness, or misery."

"Ahem," began the prudent mother, and Celeste turned quickly to hide her face, even now unconscious that her pillow was Frank's arm.

"This is not the way I arrange in usual these matters," the lady continued, with stiff dignity, "we will first have some words in private. My daughter's word cannot affect you. It is mine. Will you have the grace to grant me ten thousand pardons for begging you will at once leave her?"

Frank gently removed his arm from beneath the passive head, and in so doing he could hardly refrain from pressing his lips to its curls. Celeste was still so ill from fainting that she seemed almost unconscious of what was passing.

"As soon as your daughter is well enough, have the goodness to let me say a few words to you, madame," Frank said, and retired to the dressing-room, where he detained the pupils till they should be summoned, giving as a reason for the delay that Ma'm'selle Celeste had fallen, and felt ill effects from it.

Frank knew Celeste must pass through this room before she could retire to her chamber, which of course she would do as soon as able to walk. He therefore waited with intense anxiety for her appearance, hoping she would give him a reassuring glance, since words were forbidden.

His hopes did not deceive him, for as she entered the room, leaning wearily on her mother's arm, she slowly raised her eyes, and their pure, wistful, trusting glance rested gratefully and lovingly on Frank, until she had passed him.

Pulling his hat over his eyes, he strode down stairs, that for a short time he might be alone with his joy, and that none might share it even by suspecting it. Before he had descended many steps, however, he heard the dressing-room door slam, and as he turned, Jerome flung himself down toward him. He caught the boy, who clung to him like a monkey, and with a growl of hatred, fastened his teeth into Frank's cheek. He relaxed almost immediately into insensibility, which soon changed to convulsions.

Frank hastened with him to a physician, and as he watched his slow recovery, it was with an aching heart he felt, that, without any fault of his own, he was the cause of the boy's misery. He determined that should Jerome survive, he

would be to him as a father for the rest of his life.

Jerome's long, delirious illness, followed by temporary derangement, proved the sincerity of Frank's good intentions. He had the boy taken to his own hotel, and nursed him devotedly till he was so far improved as to allow of his being without a physician.

When this occurred, he engaged board for the lad in the family of a clergyman, living in the country, whose childless wife made Jerome the object of every tender care a warm, motherly heart could bestow. He grew fast during his illness, and the pure air in which his after life was spent, so invigorated his constitution, that, freed from his strange disease, he no longer lived

an isolated being, hopeless of pleasing his fellow creatures. The happiest result of all was, that, as his mind was restored, he gradually forgot his boyish passion, and looked upon Frank and Celeste as his dearest friends.

The last tableau with which we have to do in connexion with Frank is perhaps the most interesting, though only rendered not common-place by the rare beauty of the parties concerned. It is a scene at the altar, before which stands a venerable priest, while kneeling together under his hands extended in blessing, are a happy bride and groom. A satisfied mother forming, of course, part of the picture, with the little toymaker's brother and sisters, and Frank's relatives helping to fill up the background.

MRS. SMITH'S CHARITY.

BY ELLEN ASHTON.

"Isn't that seamstress come yet?"

Mrs. Smith, as she spoke, leaned over the balustrade, calling down the staircase to the footman.

"No, mum."

"I declare," muttered the lady, but quite loud enough for the servant to hear, "the lazy thing ought to be turned off. It's eight o'clock already. A pretty day's work it will be, begun at such an hour. John," and she raised her voice to a louder key, "be sure you tell the coachman to be around by eleven, for I've got to go collecting, with Mrs. Huntley, for the poor, this morning."

She left the staircase, as she spoke, and passed to her chamber, where she expected to spend the next two hours in dressing to go out.

It was a cold, wet morning in March. While this scene was transacting in the elegant mansion, a thinly clad, delicate-looking girl, was feebly struggling against the rain on her way to Mrs. Smith's. She had been awake for half the night, tending her sick sister, who lay dying of consumption, in the comfortless and fireless room which they occupied together, up three pair of stairs, in a narrow, ill-ventilated alley. For breakfast she had eaten nothing but a dry crust, and drank nothing but a cup of cold water. And now, with a faded summer shawl, a pair of thin, worn shoes, and an umbrella that only half protected her, she was braving the inclement weather in order to do Mrs. Smith's plain sewing at a dollar and a quarter a week.

The bell rang, and the rich lady, throwing on a splendid dressing-gown, went to the head of the staircase.

"Ah! that's you at last, Miss Jones, is it?" she said, sharply. "A full hour behind time. Recollect, Miss, what I told you. I shall keep my word, and take off a shilling for every day you are so late. Go at once into the back room, where everything's waiting for you."

Too heart-broken to remonstrate, the girl did as she was directed, and took her place in an apartment, which, as it was to be occupied "only by the seamstress," as Mrs. Smith said, was, from motives of economy, never more than half heated. Here, the girl sewed, in her damp clothes and wet feet all day, there not being warmth enough at the flue to dry either: and at night went home through the storm to her sick sister, and the cold, unfurnished room they occupied.

All that morning, Mrs. Smith, protected from the rain by her comfortable carriage, drove about, ostensibly to collect for the poor, but really to indulge in gossip, and gratify her vanity by being called benevolent. While exhibiting her splendid tablets, on which to write the names of donors, and expatiating sentimentally on the sufferings of the indigent, she took good care to say nothing of the needlewoman she had left working at a starvation price, in a cold, unhealthy room.

The next day the seamstress did not come at all. Mrs. Smith was highly indignant, especially as a piece of work, which she had particularly wished to be finished, was incomplete.

"You may tell Miss Jones, if she comes again to-morrow," she said, angrily, late in the day, "that I don't want her services any longer. People who work for me must be punctual."

When the footman went back into the kitchen, and rehearsed the message with which he had been charged, there was a general outcry among the servants.

"Pears to me," said the cook, "dat some of de rich hab no hearts at all, deed it does. Dat poor chile was a'most starved yesterday, and looked as ef she had de ager; and she has a sick sister, a dyin' of a consumption, she says. Ef I was you, Jim, I'd tell missus she might turn her off herself, deed I would." And Dinah, thoroughly aroused, flounced around the room indignantly.

But the seamstress never returned to receive

her dismissal. The exposure of the preceding day had brought on a violent inflammation of the lungs, and she was now lying, in a high fever, and drawing her breath in agony, by the side of her dying sister. Here, about dusk, her landlady found her accidentally, both having been too ill to summon assistance.

It was the charity of this woman, only less indigent than themselves, that saved the two sisters from perishing of cold and want. Not that they lived long, however, to consume her hard earnings. The violent inflammation soon carried off the seamstress; and her sister speedily followed her.

One day, while Mrs. Smith was making calls, her luxurious carriage passed a pauper funeral. The sight of the coarse, pine coffin made the rich lady shudder, as she rolled by; and she told to

all her acquaintance, that morning, how inexpressibly she had been horrified by the sight.

"Its dreadful to think how many poor people there are," she said, "and in spite, too, of all we are doing for them. There must be a great deal of improvidence and laziness to cause it. Only to think, I had a seamstress, a week or two ago, who, because I reprimanded her for coming late to her work, left in a pet, and I haven't heard of her yet."

At the Judgment Day, proud lady, you will hear of her! Yes! the outcast tenant of that pauper coffin will rise up, in that awful hour, and tell who it was that murdered her.

Vain, indeed, is the charity that gives publicly to the poor "of our abundance," if we neglect the greater charity of sympathy with the indigent and suffering whom we actually know.

GRACE GRENVILLE'S MATCH-MAKING.

BY E. W. DEWEES.

GRACE GRENVILLE sat over her embroidery, with a frown of perplexity on her broad, open brow.

It was easy to see that her thoughts were not on her cross-stitch.

After a time, a smile stole slowly over her face, as sunlight glides over a landscape, growing brighter and brighter every moment, till she suddenly sprang from her seat, dropping work, scissors and thimble in her impulsive haste, as she flew to her writing-table and began to write:

"DEAREST EMMA—When I was with you last summer, you promised to return my visit this winter. I write now to claim you. Come at once, dear Em, for I do so want to see you, and I have such a splendid plan in my head—but I won't say a word about *that*, only be sure to bring your painting material with you, for I am bent on your resuming your lessons.

"I shall send the carriage to the cars to meet you the day after to-morrow, so pray don't disappoint
Your attached friend,

GRACE."

Having despatched this hasty epistle, Grace settled herself once more to her work with much more steadiness than before; and as she sits musing there, with the lights and shadows of her sad or pleasant thoughts flitting over her expressive face, we will, while watching her, tell the reader a few points of her history.

She was an only child, loved, petted, indulged, spoiled perhaps, but a charming creature for all.

Full of earnestness and enthusiasm, she was never without some aim—some object of ardent pursuit—seldom without some golden scheme, which was to bring certain happiness to some of her friends.

Emma B— had long been the object of her greatest solicitude. Grace had discovered that she was most unfortunate in her family relations. Her father, though a man of talent and education, had fallen into intemperate habits, and rendered his home wretched. Her mother, soured perhaps by her sorrows, was harsh and forbidding in her manners. Emma, a gentle, loving, timid creature, suffered acutely in so ungenial a home. Grace had often puzzled her brain to find

some way of ameliorating her friend's position. Now, at last, she had hit on what she thought an admirable plan. She would turn match-maker! To see Emma happily married would put an end to all difficulties. Better still; she would at the same time secure the happiness of her friend, Mr. Greeley, and so kill two birds with one stone.

Mr. Greeley was a young artist, of talent so great, as already, at the age of twenty-five, to have taken his rank as first landscape painter in the country. He was a man of great cultivation and refinement—handsome, agreeable, and truly noble and good. There was not one among her friends of whom Grace thought more highly.

She was certain that Emma's gentle loveliness and true amiability would be sure to captivate him, and equally certain that she would make him a good and devoted wife.

She was so full of her project, that she could scarcely wait for her friend's arrival, or avoid betraying her deep-laid scheme to its object the moment she saw her.

It chanced that Mr. Greeley dropped in on the very evening after Emma's arrival.

Grace was delighted. "So much better to appear to have nothing to do with it," she said to herself—but her cheeks burnt with excitement, and she could not wholly conceal her nervous agitation as she introduced her friends to each other, and eagerly observed their "first impressions."

"Favorable!" she decided, as Mr. Greeley seated himself beside Emma, and engaged her in conversation, and she saw Emma, quite throwing aside her usual timid reserve, and responding with evident interest and pleasure. She noted the pretty smile and blush which always made Emma's face so engaging, and she smiled to herself as she stitched away vigorously at her embroidery, making strange confusion among her roses, while her thoughts were busy with a day-dream about the result of her match-making.

After quite a long conversation with Emma, Mr. Greeley came to beg Grace to sing some duetts with him, which they had been practising together. But no—Grace was out of voice—did not feel musically inclined—but she would play the accompaniment, and perhaps dear Emma would try to take her parts.

DARK

In vain Emma protested that she was no musician, and had never seen the music in question—Grace was determined she should learn the parts and sing with Greeley.

She played the air for her with one hand, and encouraged and scolded her into attempting it.

Emma did not succeed very well, but she looked so shy and frightened when she made mistakes, and the low, tremulous tones of her voice sounded so plaintively sweet, that Grace thought her more charming than if she had sung to perfection. She was certain Mr. Greeley thought so too, as she noted his smile of gentle consideration, and the pains he took to reassure her friend and dispel her timidity.

"Well, what do you think of him?" she could not help asking Emma, as she was closing the piano after he had gone.

Emma expressed herself so warmly in the young artist's praise, and spoke so enthusiastically of the delightful evening they had had, that Grace laughed aloud in her delight, and kissed her friend gaily. She thought it a veritable instance of love at first sight, and she had a great struggle with herself to maintain the discreet and secret character of a match-maker, she wanted so much to tell Emma all about it.

We have remarked that Grace was never without an earnest pursuit. Some all-engrossing occupation was a necessity to her enthusiastic nature. Sometimes it was music—sometimes the acquisition of languages—sometimes riding or dancing; at present painting in oil colors was the favorite hobby, and thanks to her friend Greeley's instructions and her own talent, she had really made wonderful progress in the art.

During her visit to Emma in the summer, she had amused herself by imparting some of her new-found knowledge to her friend, and she was now quite imperative that the latter should renew her efforts.

Accordingly the next morning she carried her up to her painting room, and installed her at her own easel with paints, and a ready prepared sketch before her. Emma had just added an unpardonably bad sky, when Mr. Greeley's voice, singing the air they had been practising the night before, was heard on the stairs.

Emma sprang up, and would have fled in dismay, but Grace barred her egress by placing her rest-stick across the door just as Greeley appeared.

"What! a barring out?" he asked, gaily—"did you not give me a perpetual free ticket of entrance here, Miss Grace?"

"It is not a barring out, but a barring in," replied Grace, laughingly. "Here is this silly,

timid child, wanting to run away, because she says, 'she is ashamed to have Mr. Greeley, the great artist, see her daub'—just as if all geniuses did not daub at first—it is only a sign of a 'broad style'—is it not, Mr. Greeley.' And at any rate I am sure you will be glad of two pupils instead of one—will you not?"

Mr. Greeley bowed, and expressed his happiness in feeling himself of use to either of the young ladies; and urged by Grace he took his stand behind Emma, guiding her unskilful hand, mixing her colors, encouraging and instructing her.

Grace too delighted and excited to settle herself to anything, flitted about the room criticising, jesting, laughing, and secretly congratulating herself on the success of her scheme. What though Emma's efforts, notwithstanding all Mr. Greeley's care, gave promise of being a total failure? So much the better—the less the pupil knew, the more of the master's aid and attention she required. It was all right.

So things went on. Grace full of her match-making project, gave such marked encouragement to Mr. Greeley's visits, that they became more and more frequent; till, under pretext of the painting lessons and the musical practisings, not a day passed, but what part of every morning, and the whole of every evening, was spent with the young ladies.

One day Grace chanced to be in her painting-room alone, when Mr. Greeley entered somewhat earlier than usual. He greeted her warmly, but with some embarrassment. With woman's quickness of perception, Grace at once felt that he had something to say, and instantly concluded he wished to consult her, or use her intercession with her friend.

With this idea, she looked up at him as he stood silently behind her chair, with a smile and nod so encouraging, and which seemed to say so archly, "I know what you are trying to find courage to tell me," that he replied as though she had spoken,

"Is it possible, Miss Grace, that you suspect—that you have discovered my secret?"

"I have discovered secrets more profound," replied Grace, with a little pardonable pride in her acuteness and success as a manœuvrer.

"And you encourage—you bid me hope?"

"Certainly," she answered, playfully, "why should you not hope?"

"Thank you, thank you," said Greeley, warmly, as he took her hand in his, "I am but a poor, fortuneless artist yet, dear Grace; but, thank God, I have already won some little fame, and your gracious words will cheer and sustain me

till fortune follows, and I dare claim this dear hand."

"What! what do you say?" exclaimed Grace, in extreme surprise, at his concluding words. "Emma's hand you mean."

But in spite of the decided manner in which Grace corrected him, Greeley persisted in what Grace thought his strange mistake; and it was not till he, with some impatience, asserted his right of knowing best his own meaning, that she was fully convinced. She could then only stammer forth in confusion,

"Pardon me, Mr. Greeley, my seeming encouragement—I had such a splendid scheme—and for myself, I had no idea—I never thought of such a thing."

"So I perceived—so I thought all the time," replied Greeley; "but that you never *have*, does not prove that you never *can* think of it, does it, Grace?"

"Yes, yes, it does!" cried Grace, hurriedly, turning away from those earnest, pleading eyes. "I do not wish such ideas put into my head. Oh, Mr. Greeley, Emma——"

"One word," said Mr. Greeley, interrupting her, "whatever decision you may make with regard to me, your friend is entirely out of the question. I do not wish to disparage Miss Emma; she is, I am sure, a good and amiable girl, but I could never, for a moment, think of her as a wife. So pray consider that matter settled."

Grace was much disturbed and embarrassed. She had never, as she truly said, regarded Mr. Greeley for an instant in the light of a lover. But the idea thus forced upon her, she could not but feel how entirely she respected, admired, and sympathized with him. The earnest, suppressed tones of his voice—the expression of intense anxiety which his face unconsciously wore, showed her how deeply his feelings were interested in her; and the manly restraint he put upon his words, touched her more than the most impassioned pleadings. She was moved—hesitated—would, perhaps, have given him the one word of encouragement for which he sued, but that she remembered Emma, and her disappoint-

ment, and she hardened her heart, and fled from the room lest she should relent.

Her next concern was for Emma. How terrible to crush all her rising hopes—to cloud her sun of happiness, now beginning to shine for the first time in her sad life. And if, as she feared, poor Emma's feelings were already really interested, how very dreadful it would be. How she wished she had never had anything to do with match-making.

Forcing back the tears she could scarcely restrain, she went to seek Emma, to ascertain, if possible, the extent of the mischief she had done.

Wholly occupied by her own thoughts, she absently entered her friend's room without knocking, and found her absorbed in a letter which she was reading. Emma looked up with a smile and blush at Grace's entrance, and after a moment's embarrassment, with a shy, hesitating look, put her letter into her hands.

Grace read it with increasing astonishment. It was an offer of marriage from a certain Frank Elcott, an individual of whom she had never heard.

"Who is he? Do you know him? Do you love him? Shall you accept?" she asked, all in a breath.

"I shall have to answer so many questions one at a time," said Emma, laughing. "Do I know him?—yes, since I was a child. Who is he?—a young lawyer in good practice in G——. Your third question I shall answer with your fourth—I shall certainly accept him, unless my parents object, which I am sure they cannot do."

Grace gave a great sigh of relief. Her match-making had done no harm after all. Still, conscience whispered that chance had favored her more perhaps than she deserved, and she then and there made a firm resolution, in all her life to have nothing more to do with matches, or match-making.

From this rule she was never known to deviate except on one occasion. It was when, two years afterward, she gave her hand to her artist-lover, whose constancy and manly worth had long before won her heart of hearts.

THE FATAL FLIRTATION

BY MARY L. MEANY.

At the house of a friend I frequently met a lady, whose singular loveliness and elegant manners, joined with the most winning gentleness and affability impressed me favorably at our first meeting. She was apparently about five and twenty; there was no trace of early bloom on her smooth, round cheek, and the light shade of pinkness that ever rested on her polished brow, seemed to denote that she had early tasted the bitterness of life's experience; but this, according with her soft, low-toned voice, and the lady-like repose of her whole demeanor only rendered her more interesting and attractive. One day I observed her passing from our friend's abode as I was approaching it; and I eagerly availed myself of the opportunity of making some inquiries respecting one whose history had been the subject of many vague speculations during my twilight reveries.

"Have you never heard anything about her?" asked my friend, after I had made known my intense curiosity.

"Never," was my quick rejoinder.

"That is rather strange, for though since her arrival here she has lived in almost total seclusion, her name is sadly connected with a tragic occurrence of which I wonder you have not heard. I will satisfy your curiosity by relating it.

"Irene Weston at the age of eighteen was the reigning belle in every circle in which she appeared. Not less admired for her vivacity and ready wit, than for her brilliant charms and numerous accomplishments, it was no wonder that, although by nature gifted with high mental powers, and with a heart alive to generous, noble impulses, the ceaseless and flattering homage she received had a deleterious influence, and she became incapable, seemingly, of a loftier ambition than to be the acknowledged queen of each gay assemblage. Her parents had been dead some years; and as the adopted child of a rich and worldly-minded relative, whose every wish in her regard was fulfilled when she saw her the admiration or envy of all around, poor Irene had no friendly counsellor to give her the warning advice she so much needed—to show her the vanity of the life she was leading, and to insist upon the necessity of curbing, in some degree, the wild exuberance of spirits that sometimes almost amounted to recklessness.

"As was naturally to be expected, she soon wearied of the monotonous pleasures in which she lived, and began to value them only as the means of adding to her list of conquests, the excitement of which she averred was the only thing that now held for her any interest. She became a most accomplished coquette, was alternately admired and dreaded as such; but she only laughed at the few disparaging remarks she heard, and enjoyed her heartless triumphs with haughty self-complacence.

"At length she met one whom she seemed to regard from the first with more favor than she had hitherto shown to her admirers; and as it was equally evident that Mr. Tracy's feelings were deeply interested, and as he was regarded by her adopted mother with approving eyes, it was generally reported that the wild bird had found her mate at last, and one, too, in every respect such as she could desire. But as time wore on these rumors met with less credit. It was remarked that some misunderstanding had taken place between the lovers; that Herbert Tracy observed every movement of Irene with a scrutiny that seemed the result of jealous suspicions; while she, who during the first few months of their acquaintance, had appeared more subdued and quiet in manner, assumed all at once her old reckless, half winning, half defying demeanor, seemingly indifferent to her lover's evident disapprobation.

"Things were in this state when a large mercantile establishment was opened by a stranger in the city, whom to Irene's delight she discovered to be Henry Burton, the accepted lover of her dearest school companion, Lucy Hamilton. Irene had several times visited the latter in her village home, and had there met the young merchant whom she could not but regard with esteem, though his quiet, unobtrusive manners were not calculated to please one so volatile and giddy.

"He and Lucy had long cherished a mutual attachment, but it was not till his plans for the future were definitely arranged that he felt authorized to declare his intentions to Mr. Hamilton, who without hesitation gave his consent to the projected marriage, stipulating only that it should not take place till the young man should be permanently settled in his new location.

"It chanced that the very day after this decision was given, Irene arrived to spend a week or two with her old friend and confidant Lucy, by whom she was speedily made acquainted with the contemplated events. Her joy was unbounded at learning that Lucy was to be a resident of her native city.

"How we shall enjoy ourselves together, Lucy dear," she exclaimed, gleefully, "I will ask mamma to give you a bridal party the very night of your arrival, so that you may be at once introduced to the gay circles to which you will henceforth belong."

"Not so fast, if you please," gaily responded Lucy, "my introduction to your gay circles must be on a different occasion. Have I not always promised that my first visit to your great city should be on occasion of *your* nuptials, and I will not break my word."

"But you must," returned Irene, thoughtfully.

"Ah, but I assure you I won't. I claim the favor of being first bridesmaid as you have often promised," rejoined Lucy. "Now Harry and I are willing to wait the indefinite period papa has spoken of—perhaps six months, perhaps a year, or even longer, all to depend on the success of Harry's undertaking, but you and Mr. Tracy have no occasion to defer the happy event so long."

"Yet it may be deferred even longer," replied Irene; and as she had hitherto kept her confidant apprized of every incident connected with her acquaintance with Tracy, she had now no difficulty in informing her of their present estrangement, of her consequent unhappiness, and of the painful efforts she had made to appear gay and unconcerned in order to escape the railleries of their associates. Lucy heard her with kind sympathy, and encouraged her to hope that she was only tormented by imaginary fancies. But Irene was not to be convinced, and as now removed from the gaze of envious scrutiny, she had no occasion to disguise her real feelings by an assumption of unnatural mirthfulness, her frequent fits of pensiveness and evident sadness touched the heart of the gentle Lucy, whose own happiness made her feel more deeply for the cloud that overshadowed her friend's.

"On the last evening of her visit, however, Irene seemed to have recovered all her former vivacity, and as soon as she was alone with Lucy joyfully informed her that she had thought of a capital plan to set things right, which only required Lucy's co-operation. Of course this was readily promised, and the grand plan was then unfolded—no other than that Burton, whose

engagement to Lucy was unknown beyond their quiet village, should, during the approaching winter, pay particular attentions to Irene, which on her part she would receive in such a manner as to arouse Herbert Tracy's jealousy, if as she still hoped he really loved her, and thus impel him to a declaration which would ensure her happiness.

"Now isn't it an admirable plan, Lucy?" continued the thoughtless girl, her eyes sparkling with mischief, "we will be the most tender and devoted lovers, your Harry and I. Every one will say that it is to be a match, and I dare say it will even reach your ears; but you need have no fear, Lucy darling, for *you* know he is not exactly to my taste; he is far too good for me, and I should never think of winning his love even if I were not aware that it belongs to another person. So come, help me out with the capital plot, which will be to your advantage as well as my own, do you see? For thus your lover will escape the snares that might otherwise shake his constancy when so far away from you; but I promise you I will keep him so busy with *our* flirtation, that no witching fair one shall be able to make the least impression on whatever portion of his heart still remains in his possession."

"The thoughtful Lucy seriously observed her companion as she thus rattled on, and Irene merrily bantered her on her unwillingness to put her lover's constancy to the proof. But Lucy only smiled at this and said,

"Not through any fears on my own account do I object to your plan; but tell me candidly, Irene, do you never weary of these flirtations?"

"Weary of them," repeated Irene, with sudden energy, "yes, and of myself too, but what then? However, I will promise that *this* flirtation shall be my very last; for if it succeeds of course 'twill put an end to my girlish dreams of conquest; and if it fail——" she paused abruptly, but the gloom that shadowed her face showed her companion how deeply her heart was interested in the issue of the rash experiment which with her wonted recklessness she was bent on trying.

"I am afraid your plan will not have the result you wish," said Lucy. "Don't you think it probable that Herbert Tracy, if he imagine Harry's attentions agreeable to you, will keep silent as regards his own wishes through the fear of being rejected?"

"I'll risk it," was Irene's firm reply. "But you must assist me, as you have already promised, by letting Harry know that it is *your* wish that I should introduce him to the gay

scenes in which he is hereafter to take a part, and thus he will have no fear of his attentions to me being liable to be misunderstood by *you*; by *others* I am determined they shall be.'

"'Very well, I'll assist you thus far, and only hope you may not have cause to regret my ready compliance,' said Lucy, with a sigh for the probable failure of her friend's scheme.

"Buoyed up with sanguine anticipations, Irene returned home. The gay season was commencing, and to her delight she found Harry Burton as willing as she could desire to be her cavalier, and with his habitual thoughtfulness for every one's comfort, and his gentle, deferential manners, he could not be otherwise than a most attentive and agreeable companion. Her friendship for Lucy formed a bond of union between them, and totally ignorant of the under-play in which he was thus an actor, he felt a pleasure in doing according to his absent Lucy's request that he must be as attentive as possible to her dearest friend. Thus matters were going on perfectly to Irene's satisfaction. Mr. Tracy's manner when they occasionally met was reserved and ceremonious, but her quick glance sometimes observed an expression of mingled sorrow and reproach directed to her, which she fancied argued well for the final result of her scheme.

"Ere many weeks had passed, it began to be whispered that Harry Burton had entirely supplanted Herbert Tracy in the volatile girl's regard, and Tracy, maddened by the raillery of his associates, and deeming his feelings outraged by one whom he secretly loved, swore vengeance against his fancied rival. Resolved that his revenge should be public as his discomfiture had been, he went that night to a ball at which Burton was present with Irene, and when there suddenly drew forth a pistol and fired with too true an aim at young Burton, who, with a faint groan, murmuring the name of his beloved Lucy, fell lifeless. Irene shrieked wildly and fell in a swoon beside the victim of her reckless folly; and amid the wildest confusion Tracy was seized, and the festivities of the night brought to a hasty termination.

"Irene was conveyed home in a state of insensibility, from which she revived only to be

attacked by a raging fever, which for several months threatened her life or reason. As soon as she was pronounced out of danger she was taken to the country, for the double purpose of trying the effect of quiet and change of air, and of keeping her ignorant of the censure freely passed upon her in every circle; for during the trial of Herbert Tracy every circumstance connected with the mournful affair came to light, and the indignation of the public was almost as strong against Irene as against the murderer. As for him, his remorse for his fatal error, together with the extenuating features of the case, caused him to be sentenced only to imprisonment for a term of years, which was shortened by the interposition of executive clemency, and he left the country a prey to deep and lasting remorse. But, alas! what availed his too late conviction of his error? Would it bring back the victim of his mistaken revenge, or restore the light of happiness to the gentle, loving girl whose affections were entwined around the heart his deadly aim had stilled forever? Poor Lucy! The blow was too sudden, too heavy for her to bear—she sank into a lingering decline, and in one short year slept the calm slumber of the broken-hearted. Irene was with her in her last moments; for the gentle girl harbored no unkindly feelings toward the repentant author of all this calamity.

"After Lucy's death, Irene obtained the consent of her adopted parents to come to this city, where she procured board with a small, quiet family, and lives in total seclusion from the gay world. She has devoted her life to the good of her fellow-creatures, and in the continual exercise of charity and meekness, she seeks to atone for the past, and to forget for a time the harassing memories which she says will ever haunt her as she deserves. Though she trusts that her sincere and lasting penitence has availed in the sight of Him whose judgments are not as those of men, yet she can never forgive herself; and her example is a warning lesson to the young and gay who like her are tempted to deeds, which to them appear trifling and even innocent, but whose ultimate consequences they may ever have reason to deplore."

EVERY-DAY MARTYRS.

BY F. H. STAUFFER.

We have martyrs now-a-days. True, not martyrs who are tortured on the rack, or who go down to a triumphant death amid the flash of brand and faggot, but martyrs who suffer just as much, and who, in such suffering, exhibit the same praiseworthy strength, and endurance, and fortitude.

Martyrs who *die* in struggling to *live*. Who die *inch by inch*, wearing body and soul away. Who sink unnoticed into the grave, young in years, but old in care, in suffering, and alas! in misery.

There are hero-martyrs whose daily torture no awe-struck world shall write in lines of imperishable light. There are doers and worshippers of the good, the beautiful, and the true, lifting up clear eyes to heaven, and walking serene and holy in their little sphere, whose brows no painter shall enhalo, the harmony of whose lives shall make the immortality of no poet's song.

There are martyrs in intellect. Thousands of earth's gifted ones are passing away in their quiet martyrdom. The world looks coldly upon them—pushes aside their ideal dreams with her stern, pressing realities. Men and women who are only happy when they stand motionless and charmed, like a cradled infant by its mother's voice, at their sweet incarnation of the deep things of the heart, at the bright flashes of genius from their own souls' inner shrine. And though the taper of life burns lower and lower, and hope crouches like a spectre amid the lengthening shadows, and the actualities of life chill the gushing fountains of the heart—yet they still toll on with greater efforts and with higher aspirations.

And, at last, when the long grass waves over their graves, when the starry primrose nestles over their tomb, shrinking timidly away from the garish eye of day, fame wakes a thousand echoes with her clarion notes, and the world fain would kneel to bind undying laurels around the cold and lifeless brow! *All too late then—all too dearly bought!*

Take Rousseau. He labored on unappreciated. When dead, even social and political foes heaped compliments upon his departed worth—talked of his gifted powers—lamented

his follies, and sympathized with his misfortunes. Then the world only discovered that his pen had been a pen of fire—spreading light on the darkest objects—as if he had written with phosphorous on the sides of a cavern.

Take the world's great astronomer. Gallileo pined in prison. The snails seemed to mock with their slimy traces those of his own deep-searching mind. He is dead—but the world venerates his memory.

Take our own Fulton. He toiled on—unhonored and unnoticed. Now every steamer that parts the leaping waves is a mighty, living, moving monument to his glory.

Take an example from mechanics. How Maitre Zacharius, the watchmaker of Geneva, the perfecter of horology, the inventor of the escapement, struggled and toiled on, believing that each of his watches moved by a portion of his own spul. While the greatest and most perfect piece of his workmanship—the clock of the Chateau de Andernaut—struck the midnight hour, he fell a corpse upon the tessellated floor, shrieking for his lost soul—believing the yells of a thousand demons shook the deserted alcoves. Now nearly the whole world wear *nearest to their hearts*—if not sweet recollections of his memory—at least the evidence of his discovery.

There are thousands of martyrs in our crowded cities. They crouch with squalid poverty by forsaken hearthstones, in damp recesses, in dim, old attics.

Yes! Female martyrs—the martyrs so strikingly depicted in Hood's touching "Song of the Shirt." Needle-slaves—wearing out body and soul. Stitching, stitching, steadily, unceasingly, monotonously as the water dripping on their cold, damp floors. How their brains whirl! How their fingers ache! How their bosoms heave! How their eyes burn—startling at a thousand spectral phantoms that seem to people the chilly room as the deep-toned city clock tolls out the midnight hour!

Nor alas! is this all. Among the rich and great, too, there are female martyrs. Females who weep, and groan, and toss—who bury their faces in their hands—who mourn over departed hopes—who pray for the sweet light of earlier

days when life was "sinless as is a sister's kiss." } words and more cruel treatment—who sink into
Females who bear up long and bravely against { a premature grave—yet loving on, and trusting
harshness and unkindness—who suffer from cruel { still.

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EMMA SYDNEY.

BY MISS ALICE GRAY.

BREEZES and birds are true democrats. They whisper their melodies equally to the poor man and the rich man. It is one of the worst evils of poverty that it often deadens the ear to such cadences—that is, its accompaniments do. Poverty itself, what is it but a slight hold on gross material things, giving room for a firmer one on the refined and spiritual? I know a decayed dwelling in a village in western New York over which they used to hover—these little democrats—as blithely as if wealth and state held their court within. And yet if they had remained by their party they could not have come there, for it was only the remains of aristocratic feelings and manners that prevented the inhabitants from sinking into the condition of those who live only in the present. No one could have helped pitying Mr. Sydney's family, and all the more for the constant effort to hide all cause for pity. There is no poverty so bitter as that which carries with it the memory of something better—no inheritance so burdensome and yet so proud and dear as that of a name which entails unceasing care for itself. Within the house was neglect and decay. The walls were crumbling, the furniture dropping to pieces, the carpets wearing out. Every little ornament had grown shabby long ago, every curtain faded, every picture dingy. Mr. Sydney's rusty coat, out in a fashion long by-gone, and Mrs. Sydney's clothes, carefully worn and repaired, told the same tale. Spirit-bowed and listless that poor woman moved about the house. She had no heart to attempt more than to push on matters from day to day.

Poor Mrs. Sydney! One morning in November she received a letter. When her husband entered the room, she extended it to him.

"James, Emma is coming home."

Mr. Sydney looked stupefied. "Well!" he said, as if wishing to hear more.

"She is coming home, I tell you—here to this desolate, ruined house," and she glanced around the comfortless room.

Mr. Sydney's eyes followed hers, and a groan escaped him. "How comes it about?" he asked.

"There is the letter. Your sister's husband is dead, and she is going into the country for a time, and so Emma is coming to her well remembered home," she says. "Poor child! It is rather

different from what it was when she left it, eight years ago."

For a long time the father and mother sat in silent despondency.

"Is there no way of preventing this?" said Mrs. Sydney. "To have her come here with her habits of luxury and elegance, her gay tastes and bright young spirits, to this impoverished, dreary house. Oh, she has no idea what it is."

Mr. Sydney covered his face with his handkerchief, and left the room. His wife sat for nearly an hour like one crushed beneath a heavy weight. At the end of that time her brother alighted at the front door.

"What is the matter, Eliza?" said he, as he entered the room.

She pointed to the letter on the table. He read it, and then indulged in a prolonged "whew!"

"Rather an unpromising state of things for the girl, I confess, but I don't see what you have to cry about."

"Oh! Robert."

"Now, that's always the way with you women. If one can't understand your feelings at once, off you go into the third heavens, or the Lord knows where. For my part, I should think you'd be glad to see your only daughter again."

"Robert, can I calmly see a beautiful, petted, lively girl of eighteen come to such a place as this, and witness all the petty shifts and contrivances of an hourly miserable economy, which suffices not to hide poverty and desolation? I can struggle on by myself. I am used to it. But I hoped she was safe from all annoyance."

"How does Mr. Sydney take it?"

"His heart bleeds that he has no better home to offer his daughter."

"What can I do, Robert?" asked Mrs. Sydney, after a long pause.

"Do! Why there's only one thing to be done. If the child's coming back, bestir yourself and make everything look as cheerful as you can. There's your duty—walk right up to it."

But Mrs. Sydney could not "walk right up" to her duty. With nerves and spirit all unstrung she could only feebly and wearily make some arrangements in her daughter's bed chamber. Mr. Sydney himself might have been seen going about the house, during the day, with a sad,

wistful air, playing the carpenter at some broken piece of furniture or refractory window-shutter, and trying to coax the shabby sitting-room into an appearance of comfort. He even took out of his desk an old-fashioned locket, containing a miniature of his mother, and proceeded to the jeweler's to dispose of it.

"What will you give me for this?" he asked.

The man named a low sum.

"No more than that?" said Mr. Sydney.

"No, sir, it is too old-fashioned to sell. We can only take it for old gold."

"Well, it must do, I suppose. You can take out the portrait. That is of no value to you."

Half shuddering as he saw the man's coarse fingers pass over the beloved features, he took the money and hurried home.

"This won't go very far," said he, as he gave it to his wife, "but it's all I have."

If people could only be present when their letters are opened! particularly those announcing their coming. Emma Sydney in her bright, gleesome anticipations of home never dreamed how her letter was welcomed. And then again never come before the appointed time. Even if expectations are ever so anxious, such a thing always seems something like a cold shower-bath. Emma had named a week from the day her letter came as the time when she might be expected, but the evening of the same day—a dreary November evening—saw her at her father's door.

In another minute she was in the parlor, embracing her parents, kissing her brothers, fondly patting the old mastiff's head, smiling, laughing, talking all in a breath. Then she threw off her hat, and let her chesnut curls fall down over her neck. "How good the fire feels!" she exclaimed, "that last stage ride was so cold."

And as she warmed her hands over the blaze, and smiled brightly, Mrs. Sydney smiled too, and forgot her anxious watchfulness for her daughter's first glance around the room.

"Oh! how hungry I am!" exclaimed Emma, as she seated herself at the tea-table.

"I am glad you are, my dear," said her mother, "for they say hunger makes even the plainest food taste good."

"Indeed I am hungry. I could eat oceans of bread and butter."

"There is little better here, I am afraid."

"What could be better than bread and butter? And this is so different from our city bread. It will be quite a treat."

After tea, Emma seated herself by her father on the old rickety sofa, not seeming to notice the cold draught coming through the crevices made by the ill-fitting shutter behind her, and amused

the family with a lively account of her journey. Lightly and gayly she ran on, till her father laughed as he had not done for years, and her brother Robert came out from his corner, and placed himself at her feet. Poor fellow! a blush had tinged his cheek as he had felt his sister's eye glance over his rough jacket and shabby pantaloons. He was only one year younger than herself, a high-spirited boy, and the fallen condition of his family made him sullen, irritable, and capricious. But this evening he yielded himself to the charms of Emma's conversation. And gentle, pensive Harry, three years younger, drew near and hung upon her lips. She seemed to diffuse a sparkling, bounding atmosphere all around her, and when eleven o'clock struck, and she rose to go to bed, all started with a wondering smile to think they had spent such a pleasant evening.

"I am afraid you will not find your bed very good, my dear," said her mother, who accompanied her to her room. She sighed as she spoke.

"Because it's feathers, do you mean? Oh! I'm not at all afraid of them. You don't know how I shall enjoy it, after being tied to a mattress, winter and summer."

Mrs. Sydney had not meant that. There were only five feathers in the bed, one in the middle, and one at each corner—not enough to hurt her.

Emma's gay laugh as she said good-night echoed strangely through the old hall. She closed the door, threw herself down on the sofa, and then one long flood of tears. There had been but one effort since her first shocked glance at the house and her parents' faces—for their sake to hide her feelings. And nobly had she succeeded. But now the pent-up flood burst forth resistlessly. Poor girl! most sudden and cutting had been the disappointment of her fair, sweet hopes and cherished anticipations, and most saddening the aspect of everything as she read all at a glance. After a long time she got up and looked around. Oh! how her heart ached as the mournful messages from every desolate corner, from every moth-eaten curtain, from the scanty furniture, stole to her ear. And then a sense of the inefficacy of a woman's yearning came upon her, and again she threw herself down, but this time it was before an all-powerful Friend. She entreated consolation, support, and guidance—guidance that cannot err, for she felt that she had a work to do here.

She longed for a man's strong arms as she stood by the window the next morning, looking out upon the over-grown garden. If she had them she would make that spot a well-spring of cheerfulness. There was much to do at every

turn, and only a girlish hand to do it. The forced resort to passive energy and moral action fretted her spirit. She brought her guitar into the sitting-room, established her work-table in one corner, got out her embroidery, brought down her port-folio, some favorite books, and chess-board. And then what more could she do, for her mother shrank nervously from any participation of hers in housekeeping. Oh! what could she do? She had done much. She had made the sitting-room a place where people could smile, instead of the bare, cheerless room it had been. Her joyous conversation, her winning, affectionate manners, her tender attentions to parents, her ringing laugh were of themselves sufficient to work great good. She had need of an inexhaustible fund of good spirits, for there was everything to depress her. On the first Sunday after her arrival she happened to ask her mother if she were going to church.

"To church? I never go to church," said Mrs. Sydney.

Emma looked rather than said, "Why not?"

"My dear, I have no clothes to appear in."

This time Emma could not hide the tears. On Monday morning she was up before light, trying to alter some of her dresses to suit her mother, and laying aside her best shawl and bonnet for her. Her quick eye saw but too well the many, many mortifications and humiliations which her parents bore, and she gently tried to induce her mother to let her share in her burden of care. In a few weeks the air and tone of the household were much changed. But her brother John, who at first had responded to her affection, resisted all attempts to win his confidence to make him happy. In the evenings when she was singing to her guitar, or beguiling her father and mother by her lively chat, while she gave her brother Henry drawing lessons, the very cheerfulness of the scene would seem to drive John away. In vain she tried to draw him into the circle. "It is hard to prop up a falling house," her uncle Robert said, "our very props often come down upon us." John was awkward in his manners, very bashful, his education had not proceeded much farther than the grammar-school course, and he was painfully conscious of his deficiencies. Discontented and full of uneasy desires, he had allowed himself to be drawn into low company.

Weeks and months passed on. How dear was Emma Sydney to her mother's heart, that care-worn, saddened heart—how precious her love and sympathy! And how often did her father's eyes fill with warm tears as he looked upon her!

One morning as Mrs. Sydney's brother Robert

was passing the village hotel, he heard a lady's voice calling him from the piazza, "Dr. French! Dr. French!"

He turned and recognized Mrs. Evans, Mr. Sydney's sister. "How do you do?" she said. "How are they at my brother's? I did not go immediately there," she continued, assuming a confidential tone, "because I judged from the tone of Emma's last letter that it might not be convenient. She did not say so, you understand, but still——" and the lady made out her sentence with significant bows.

The first judgment I ever knew you to form that was good for anything, thought the gentleman.

"I am come to take dear Emma away," said Mrs. Evans, as she arranged her veil before walking down with Dr. French.

She was very confident, but Emma quietly refused to leave her father's house.

Mrs. Evans could not believe her serious at first, but after laughing at her and expostulating with her in vain, she grew really angry.

"Dr. French," she said, "do help me to reason this silly girl out of this nonsense."

"Indeed, ma'am, I am afraid I can't help you there; my reasoning would be all the other way."

"Is it possible? Are you crazy, Dr. French? Don't you see that she is evidently blind to her own interests? I don't wish to hurt your feelings, James, nor yours, Eliza, but you must know that this is no place for Emma. She can hardly be comfortable here. I speak plainly, you see, Dr. French, I am not disposed to squeamishness."

"Nor I, madam."

"I am very sorry it is so, James," she added, as she saw the color rising in Mr. Sydney's cheek, "and I respect the feeling that would conceal it, but some things can't be concealed. Besides, Emma is throwing herself away here. All she has acquired is of no use to her. Her music, for instance, that I have taken so much trouble with, of what good is it here? Her dancing, her drawing, her admired talent for conversation, for entertaining company—useless. All her accomplishments are utterly wasted."

"Indeed, madam," replied Dr. French, "in my humble opinion, they could not be put to a better use than the present one. Which should be the best repayment for hours of toil—the privilege to cheer and sooth her parents, or of screeching an opera, or exhibiting a port-folio to a crowd of silly fops?"

"That all sounds very pretty, Dr. French, but I'm talking of plain facts. Emma's future interests are to be considered also."

"We are commanded to work while it is called to-day, taking no thought for the morrow."

"Now, Dr. French, we all know that the Bible is not to be interpreted literally."

"Rather too literally for you, madam, I'm afraid. Let Emma do her duty now, and not trouble herself about the future. I know it will be a great, a very great sacrifice, but not because she will have to give up the trifling you mention—trifling, God forgive me, there is no such thing as trifling on this blood-bought, Christ-watched earth."

"Emma, my darling, come here," said Mr. Sydney, holding out his arms. "You are the staff of my heart, my child, the one light of this dreary house," and the old man folded her to his breast, "no earthly motive but your own happiness could make me tell you to leave us."

"Leave you! no, never!" exclaimed Emma.

"Listen to me, my child. We are poor, yet if there was only a crust left, we would share it with our daughter. But for your own sake, I cannot let you refuse what your aunt offers. It will be very hard to part with you—the harder for the glimpse of happiness we have had, but never mind that, go back with your aunt."

"Father, do not send me from you," exclaimed Emma, bursting into tears. "Is not your happiness mine? I cannot, I ought not to go."

"But Emma——"

Emma threw her arms around her father's neck, and whispered long in his ear, till he bowed his head upon her glossy ringlets and murmured, "Be it so."

Emma Sydney had turned with scarcely a sigh from the gay world to which her aunt beckoned her, but soon rose another voice, speaking more powerfully to her maiden heart. She had been engaged to be married ever since she was sixteen. The time appointed for her marriage had now come, and the urgent solicitations of her lover, George Dunbar, came too. With tears blinding her eyes, Emma told him the story of the house of her fathers, decayed, impoverished and desolate—told him of her sad-hearted mother, of her father grown prematurely old.

"Do not ask me to leave them, George," she sobbed, "I am fulfilling a sacred duty, one dear to my heart. I cannot, I dare not go."

"But my own, my dearest Emma——"

"In the name of pity, George, do not make my task harder. I have decided. Never while my parents suffer will I leave them."

"Where got she the strength?" questioned George Dunbar, as he travelled homeward. "Did no weakness, no weariness, no yearnings ever invade her spirit's sanctuary?" He might have

answered both questions had he seen the passionate weeping of the next two hours, and then the long kneeling before Jesus.

A few days after, Emma was sitting by the window of her own room, when she saw a little German girl creeping up through the garden.

"Miss Emma," she said, "I come to tell you. Oh! mine Gott, I could not help it."

"What do you mean? What is it, Edla?"

"Well, Mr. John Sydney comes to our house very often, you know, Miss Emma."

"No, I did not know it—but what then?"

"Well, he was there last night. Two or three men were there, and I could not sleep, and there was a crack in the wall, and—oh! will any one hear me?—I listened, and heard all they said. They are going to rob the jeweler's shop to-night. Mr. John is the one to break in, and the rest go shares in the plunder."

"Edla, do you know what you are saying? My brother John! break in a shop? What do you mean?"

"Indeed it's true, Miss Emma. They play cards every night, brother Franz and the other men, and Mr. John has lost more than he can pay, and I think that's the reason he has to mind them so. The plan is all fixed, Miss Emma, for to-night. They meet at our house at twelve o'clock. I could not help coming to you about Mr. John. You'll never let them know I told you, will ye? They'd beat the life out of me."

"Don't be afraid, Edla. No one shall know. Tell me now, quick, who is engaged in this besides your brother-in-law?"

"Martin and Heinrich Werner. Oh! they've got such long knives," said the child, shuddering.

"Go home now, Edla. Say nothing to any one. I thank you for coming. Go home as quick as you can."

Had the Sydney family indeed fallen so low? All now depended on Emma's single arm. About eleven o'clock that night she wrapped herself in an old cloak and hood, stole out of the house and pressed on through the darkness and rain. She had little of the heroine in her composition, and yet she had embarked in what might indeed be called an adventure. She was too excited to think of herself, though alone in that lonesome place, late at night. She perceived a light glimmering from Franz Muller's kitchen as she approached, and looking through a round hole in the shutter, saw three men sitting round a table, and her brother John in a slouched hat putting some tools in his pocket. Her heart beat violently. The long knives of which little Edla had spoken sprang gleaming before her sight, but breathing a prayer she knocked boldly at the

door. It was opened by one of the men. "I wish to see my brother," she said. The man attempted to bar her passage, but she was too quick for him and sprang past. He seized her by the arm with a terrible oath. In an instant John Sydney pushed him back. "Off!" he exclaimed, "do not touch my sister. Emma, how came you here?"

"No matter—I am here; and now, John, come home with me. Think of your father's grey hairs. Will you cover them with shame? Will you beat down your mother's broken heart into the grave?"

"It is of no use to talk to me, Emma," said John, "it is too late. Leave me alone. What did you come here for?"

"It is not too late, John. Listen to me. Do you want money—I am young and strong. I will work my fingers to the bone for you. Oh, John, you have not fallen so low—I do not believe it."

John looked in his sister's excited countenance, sat down and hid his face upon the table.

"John, think how young you are. Think of the life before you. Think of your mother."

In the meantime, the men had held a hurried consultation in German. Heinrich Werner, the roughest of them, now approached Emma.

"Look here, mistress," said he, "if this only concerned that chicken-hearted brother of yours I wouldn't care, but I and my friends have an interest in it, and if you think you're going to ruin us, you're mistaken. John there'll do as he has promised: and you don't leave this house to-night, at any rate."

Werner spoke in a menacing tone, and then threw his brawny arm around her waist. John Sydney started to his feet, and sprang at Werner's throat like a wild cat.

"Brute," he shouted, "do you dare to put your hands upon her?"

The other men pulled him off. "Be quiet, boy!"

"Let go of my sister!" shouted John.

"Well, there then," said Werner, "you needn't make such an outrageous fuss about it. I wasn't hurting her."

The men now let John go, who, with his heart bursting with passion, immediately drew Emma to his side. She beckoned to Franz Muller. "Only let John alone," she said, "tempt him no more, and I will stay here with him all night, if you say so. You need not fear my letting any of this be known, for then, you know, you will have it in your power to tell of my brother's share, and you know well I would make any sacrifice rather than have that."

"There's some reason in what the girl says," said Muller

"I'm not going to give it up so," said Werner, "John, are you one such dough-face as to let a woman's nonsense rule you?"

Again John hesitated. But the wicked spell had been broken. At the crisis a breath will turn the scale. He suffered Emma to answer for him. Werner scowled upon them both, and uttered dark threats. After half an hour's violent scene Emma prevailed.

When they reached the door of their own home, John had to carry his sister in. The next day she was unable to leave her bed. He sat by her for hours, alternately looking into her pale face, and closing his eyes to view the abyss from which she had rescued him. He felt that she had earned a right to his confidence, and poured into her ear all his restless, impatient desires. As soon as she could, she wrote to her aunt Evans, and implored her in the persuasive manner she so well knew how to use, to give to John the generous allowance she had told her at parting should still be hers. Then he could go to college, and—on went the sister's anticipations through many a sparkling year.

November with his dark, dreary days had come and gone. The frost-angel had been scattering gems of light from his white arm. Emma's heart had been made glad by her aunt's promising, "for Emma's dear sake," to bear John's expenses at college.

Mr. and Mrs. Sydney never knew of the blow they had escaped, but another was coming now. One morning Harry opened the door to a surly-looking man, who presented a bill to Mr Sydney.

"I cannot pay it," said he, the color mantling in his sallow cheek. "Your employer knows I cannot."

About dusk the deputy sheriff came with a writ in the usual form, directing "to attach the real and personal estate of the defendant, and for want thereof to take his body."

The house and all that was in it would not have satisfied the debt. Mr. Sydney might have obtained bail, but totally prostrated by the blow, he thought only of literal compliance with the law. He was at sixty an old, old man; he had long been accustomed to quiet submission to circumstances; and now, with an obstinacy which proved the shattered state of his mind, he prepared for the indignity of being conveyed to the county jail. He heeded not the tears and remonstrances of his wife and daughter. With but one long look back upon the house in which he had been born, he entered the chaise with the sheriff.

Mrs. Sydney sent immediately for her brother. Before nine o'clock he had procured bail, but the jail was ten miles distant, and it was thought best not to send over till the morning. In the morning Mr. Sydney was too ill to be moved. Provision for his comfort had to be made in the prison, and Emma took up her station by his side, and listened with a sinking heart to his incoherent talk. Her cheek grew pale, and her frame full of languor, but she heeded it not. Sometimes she passed the night alone in that dim cell, and how fast and how far did her thoughts travel! Back to the brilliant scenes where she once sported—away to the proud halls to which she had been wooed as mistress—to her impoverished, but dearly-loved home. And beneath her feet was the floor where hardened wretches had often lain. She questioned of her own identity as she looked around. But a groan from the bed—all was terrible truth. Oh! how thick the clouds seemed gathering round her and hers.

One night there was weeping, low, but heart-broken in that prison room, for Dr. French had pronounced Mr. Sydney's sleep that which "knoweth no waking." Mrs. Sydney's enfeebled frame gave way, and she was carried fainting into the apartments of the jailor. But Emma persisted in trying the restoratives that her uncle had declared were of no farther use. With compressed lip and eye unnaturally bright, she bent over the cold and motionless form. Dr. French had left her to attend to her mother, and poor Harry had thrown himself down in a corner, with his brow pressed to the cold stones, and was sobbing as if his heart would break. But Emma's white, trembling hands desisted not.

"He moved, Harry! Father moved!" she shrieked.

"Emma!" said the boy, reproachfully.

"It is true. Come here. He is living."

With renewed energy she now applied the stimulants. Harry flew for his uncle.

There was a half hour of intense anxiety, and then Dr. French's voice was heard saying, as he laid his hand upon the head of his niece, "Emma Sydney! you have saved your father's life."

From that hour Mr. Sydney began to grow better. In a week or two he was well enough to be removed to his own house. Emma's arm was his support during his tedious convalescence, and Emma's gentleness and self-denial the same amid all the worshipping tenderness that was lavished upon her.

Some gentlemen in the neighborhood, to whose ears had come the tale of Emma's self-devotion, obtained a midshipman's warrant for Harry, and his pay, almost the whole of which he sent to his parents, lifted off much of the pressure of their poverty.

In three years John graduated at Yale with the first honors. Emma listened proudly to his eloquent valedictory, but how much sweeter to her heart was the whisper that stole to it a few moments afterward, "I have to thank you for all, my sister."

When, at last, Emma Sydney stood at the altar, beside George Dunbar, a blushing bride, she was a thousand times more happy for having waited till she had fulfilled her duty! Her after life was eminently happy, for is not such a youth the bright promise of a golden maturity?

THE FOOT-PRINT.

BY A. L. OTIS.

It was a warm, soft evening in May, when my handsome, portly uncle, sat surrounded by his sons and daughters, on the porch of his fine country-house, enjoying the balmy air and listening to the spring sounds of falling water and piping frogs. His genial countenance encouraged the free, unembarrassed chatter of the young folk, while a smile now and then, and a glance at his gentle wife who sat beside him, or the pressure of her hand which he held in his, showed how kindly and sympathizingly he entered into family joys.

"Oh, if I could only travel!" cried his eldest son Clarence.

"Make your fortune, and you can," John answered.

"Yes, but that will not be made till I am an old man, and past the season of keen enjoyment. I have always noticed too, that the older people grow the more they love home. See father and mother now. They could travel, if they wished, yet what do they care for a trip to Europe?"

"Not much, Clarence," answered my uncle. "But I had a youthful wish, strong as yours, and by no means so easy of accomplishment. It seemed hopeless, or at least not to be fulfilled till late in life, and the chances against it would grow with every year. But Europe will stay where it is, and be in no danger of being lost to you forever. Suppose I tell the young people all about it, mother?"

My aunt hesitated to assent, but we all clamored for the tale, and my uncle obtained permission to tell it.

"When I was the age of Clarence—about nineteen—I was a journeyman carpenter."

"You, uncle?" I cried, open-eyed, for he was the grandee of the whole family branch, and the one that lived in most luxury.

"Yes, Annie, didn't you know it? Perhaps you won't have anything more to do with your plebeian uncle. Yes, I was a journeyman, but I had a turn for drawing and a love of architecture as a study, that made me very ambitious of being something else.

"It was on the fifteenth of May, sometime in eighteen hundred, that an old gentleman came to the workshop, and began a conversation with my boss. Yes, boys, I used to say 'my boss,'

just like any other journeyman—and the result of that visit was, that after the masons had done their work, a number of carpenters, and I among them, were set to work upon a splendid country mansion. We boarded near that we might work longer, and were made reasonably comfortable by our old Irish hostess. By December the house was habitable, but there was still a conservatory to be built, and the old gentleman, whose name I will tell you by-and-bye, having seen some of my drawings, determined that I should design it. I had time to prepare my plans, for it was not to be commenced till the next summer. The other carpenters all went away, and I remained alone to put on the few last touches. But this seemed an endless job, my old friend thought of so many little conveniences for his wife and only daughter—so many little shelves and brackets, here and there—so many rustic seats for the woods, &c. Then began the fitting of doors which had swelled: and indeed I was kept there till I was sick of it. I longed for some companionship—I was like a Robinson Crusoe tantalized by society almost within reach.

"And in another respect I was like Crusoe, for one morning when I came to my work I stood amazed to behold by the door-step, in the frozen mud, the print of one single, little foot! It had not made a deep impression, but such a perfectly defined, little fairy footstep I never saw before. How could it have come there? No lady lived in the neighborhood, and the foot must have belonged to a lady, for it was the print of a delicate Paris shoe, made 'rights and lefts!' I went to my work in a dreamy mood, for I was only nineteen, and was ready for any romance. Besides, after my long solitude, the very sight of a lady would have been a delight.

"I was not long to remain in suspense, for presently the coachman came by, and told me he had driven his 'master and the young lady' out the night before. She was to remain and direct putting the house in order, that her mother might be comfortable on her arrival. The morning before several servants, and some furniture, had arrived.

"I began to feel awakened interest in the place, and after I saw the young lady, who was

leaning on her father's arm, and going about with him delightedly from room to room, I would not have had my work done sooner. She was a pretty, lovely darling, with sunny hair, and very blue eyes. Ah, boys! my heart was gone from that moment! But how dared I let it go—poor dog of a journeyman as I was? It was necessary that the aristocratic heiress should not even guess at my presumption in loving her, ever so far off.

"She passed me with a glance at my work, but her eyes had not rested upon me at all. I was only a tool which her father used to make pretty things for her. She was now begging to have a shady room, facing the woods, fitted up for her own library, and I was directed to follow them to receive orders about where to place the shelves, for her father did not refuse her request. In telling me how she wished it done, she, of course, raised her blue eyes to mine to see if I understood, and I felt again that I was a tool, a mere tool. I went to my work with a busy brain, boys. But to be short, I saw her every day, and every day I loved her more. I took the liberty, before I made the shelves to her library, to submit to her a little plan in the gothic style for the whole interior of the room, one which harmonized well with the woods outside. How intensely I worked at that plan! How the blood left my cheek when I gave it to her, and how it rushed back when she clapped her hands with delight over the drawing I had made.

"I had pleased her, and whenever she met me in the morning she always smiled and nodded to me. I never failed to meet her pretty early, boys, and I worked twice as heartily after that smile. But I was not only working with my hands, I was keeping my brain pretty busy, and determining to marry that sweet, little aristocrat, she being willing. Not to elope with her, or to win her heart, and then wring a reluctant consent from her doating parents. Oh, no! But I had my plans.

"Every day when my work was done I went to look at that little foot-print, for it was on the shady side of the house, and the ground had not thawed. One night, when I had not seen her for the whole day, the sight of it so warmed my heart, that with a sudden impulse I threw myself down and kissed it. Oh, boys! How ashamed I felt when I sprang up and saw her standing at the parted curtains of the parlor window, looking at me! But she only thought I had stumbled, and almost fallen, as I saw by her face.

"Winter passed away while I was still at work on the library, but May-day saw it finished, and

(I haven't told you her name. We will name her after mother Eve—Eva) Eva's harp was sent for that she might see how it would sound in her favorite room. I carried it myself, and then her father, probably seeing my eager eyes, asked me to stop a minute and hear her play. She paid no regard to me, but swept the chords and played little airs, and then a pretty accompaniment, beginning also to sing that sweet, old-fashioned song—not so old then, 'The harp that once through Tara's halls.'

"I trembled like a leaf when I left the room. After that, many a day, my heart and hands kept time to Eva's music as I worked about the house. Meanwhile I was preparing a little surprise for her in my leisure hours, and on the last day I was to be there, I placed beside her harp a light music-stand which I had designed myself. I think still that it was beautiful, and then I hoped it would be very pleasing to her. I expected to be gone when she discovered it, but as I was gathering up my tools, she came running to the temporary carpenter's-shop with her curls all blowing about, and the color fresh in her cheek, and stood bashfully at the door thanking me. It was the first time she had been in the least bashful, and somehow I was very glad to see it. It gave me confidence to reply fittingly with my most man-of-the-world bow. She was gone again, and in a few minutes I heard her father say, as they walked together along the lilac-path, 'Yes! he is a fine workman, and a grateful, trust-worthy fellow. I shall always try to get him for any work we may have to do. His master promised me last winter that he should put up our conservatory!'

"Every word made me feel my position, yet as I knew that position well before, I was only glad to get praise in it and to be so well thought of. It did not hinder me from being, some day, something else.

"The next month I went there again with my designs. They were approved, and I was desired to make a drawing of the house as it would look with the conservatory added to it. I took my paper, and sitting under the shade of a large sycamore tree, began to draw. It was a very warm day, and the green shutters were all closed. I felt quite alone, so throwing off my coat and hat, I——"

"Now let me describe him," cried my aunt, warmly, while we all looked at her astonished.

"Did you see him?" "Where were you?" and "How do you know about it, mother?" my cousins asked.

"Ah, mother! you have let the cat out of the bag! Yes, your mother, children, was Eva, and

she had a good right to know how I looked, for while I drew and unconsciously gazed at the house, she was sitting behind those closed shutters, taking for the first time, I suspect, a good look at the carpenter boy."

"Yes, and I was struck with his handsome looks, his long, curly, light hair, his healthy, sun-burned face, cooled off by his large, blue eyes, and his strong, graceful form, as now and then he threw himself back that he might catch the effect. You see, father, I can rave too."

"Well, let me go on my own way!"

"No, father, no more nonsense before the children."

"Ah, mother!" burst from all in expostulation. But she blushed and looked with entreaty at her husband. He smiled and pressed her hand, continuing in a different strain, and disappointing us youngsters of all the love-making.

"After the conservatory was finished, I went back to my employer and to other work, but I studied hard to qualify myself to be an architect. Then through your grandfather I got plenty to do. I had a will, and an object. Only perseverance was wanting on my part. But what if some one should meanwhile persuade Eva to marry him? There was my fear. So though I did not lose hope—I worked under a spur, and when after a few years I saw my first church rise nobly in the land, and Eva still so young and fond of her home, I grew strong in hope.

And who, boys, should come to my aid just then but the emperor of all the Russias."

"For my former employer had gone there and become locomotive builder. He now wrote to me to come out and construct depots, railroad stations, &c. It cost me a struggle. I seemed to be leaving Eva to any one she should fancy, for I had never said one word to her of my love for her. She did not know I ever dared to think of her. But certainly there was a brilliant prospect before me if I went, and I did go. Yes, boys, and after spending five years there, I came back a wealthy man, only twenty-seven years old, to find Eva still unmarried, and as beautiful as she had been pretty before. She was just twenty-three, old enough to know her own mind. So when we asked her father's consent to our marriage, he gave it cheerfully and blessed us both."

"But, father, do just tell us how you met, and when you proposed."

"Well, I proposed not long after my return, and yet your mother was quite willing. So I think when she took that long look from behind the closed shutters, I must have made some impression."

"No more, father," said my aunt, and bade us all come in or we should catch cold.

For sometime after I heard my uncle's story, I always looked, when I walked in the mud, to see what kind of a foot-print I made.

MARIE TREVOR.

BY MRS. M. A. DENISON.

[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by Charles J. Peterson, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 217.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE CONTINENT.

"I CANNOT tell how wonderful and beautiful everything seems here, dear mother. I never was so happy, I think, in all my life before. I know not why I have felt such yearning desires to visit England—it seems at times as if I should have been born here—though to be sure it is not such a country as my own. But everything old seems so grand, and everything new so majestic: indeed the very air I breathe inspires me."

Mrs. Le Dunlap smiled quietly upon the enthusiastic girl, and continued the meditations which her rhapsody had broken. Marie reclined gracefully upon a lounge, drawn beside her foster-mother. The room from which they looked upon the sea of pedestrianism wave after wave rolling along the narrow street, an endless continuation of strange faces all so different, glancing and disappearing, was in one of the more quiet hotels, situated not exactly in the heart of the city—but in one of the important arteries leading to it. It was luxuriously furnished, and commanded a fine view of St. Paul's mighty dome, that in rich coloring lay distinctly outlined and embodied against the blue of the sky.

Marie was just recovering from the effects of her rough and perilous passage, and her cheek had lost somewhat of its healthful hue. A sombre, yet tastefully elegant morning-dress set off her graceful form—her curls were gathered in loops and laid loosely on the fair brow, just touching the full, rounded throat. Mrs. Le Dunlap, in whose deep eye slept a world of thought, was attired somewhat similarly—she was really regaining her beauty. The beauty of woman in her full prime was hers: the wide brow—neither too high nor arched—the oval cheek, a shade whiter than Marie's, the heavy tresses that sorrow in blanching had not rendered one whit less luxuriant or glossy—the handsome lips, red and full—the large, magnificent form—truly had Marie's foster-mother out of much travail and bitter anguish renewed her youth. Like the eagle, unfettered, her soul soared heavenward—

and that divine genius gave joy and consolation to many a burdened heart—no longer feeding upon its own strength—no longer consuming in its own flame.

"That is a fine show," said Mrs. Le Dunlap, musingly, and she directed Marie's attention to the dashing equipage and liveried servants of a noble lord just then passing.

"I had rather see one of our neat Broadway carriages," replied Marie, as the blazing light upon the panels, and the glittering gold upon the bonds of servitude faded away in the dusky distance.

"But it is so famous to ride in state—so delightful to have people point out, 'there is lord, or earl, or baronet so and so's carriage.' It gives one such consequence to be waited on by a red cap and garters, or a blue swallow-tail and yellow kids. It makes the poor people stare so, with gaping wonder, that the carriage might go right down their throats before they move out of their astonishment, it brings obsequious clerks bowing and grimacing to the side-walk to get your ladyship's orders, and you may have the whole shop turned out-of-doors to save you the trouble of walking from your carriage. It makes even hotel keepers civil, and the porters would spin around London on their heads to serve you. In fact, everything changes for the better save the sweet flowers that *will* unveil their gentle hearts beneath the window of the humblest man—save the holy sunshine that steals even to the prisoner's stone cell—save the blessed air that breathes life and health to the very beggar that sits under the eaves of the poor-house. Now confess, Marie, that you would really like to ride in an earl's carriage—to be an earl's bride—to wear a tiara of regal diamonds; a coronet that would well become that noble brow—to be quoted, courted, caressed; the queen and pink of fashion—the new star to which all eyes should be directed, opera-glasses included."

"Why, mamma!" exclaimed Marie, laughing heartily, "how you talk—what set you in such a strain?"

"Confess—confess," said the other, with forced

gaily, "you are at the confessional—imagine me your father or mother confessor, and say how well you would like all these things."

"Not one tenth part as much as my own dear native land—its free and happy institutions—its unassuming, yet elegant observances," replied Marie, earnestly.

"But supposing—*only* supposing, you know, that it should turn out you were some great man's daughter—that you were offered a home of magnificence such as your imagination never pictured—fairer than fairy dreams, richer than fabled Aladdin's treasures; suppose you were offered all these—and some glorious, god-like form, wearing a title and a *coronet*, with a family roll that has been made royal with the blood of kings, should offer you his hand, his heart, and his honors—would you not look down upon your humbled connections, upon *me*, upon Frederic?"

"Mother—mother, how strangely you talk! as if I *could* prove so recreant! Is my love but the down of the thistle, that vanishes at a light breath? How can you speak thus?—forget *you*! forget Frederic! I would not exchange either for England's throne; how can you so misjudge me? But solve this mystery," she added, after a long pause, during which Mrs. Le Dunlap had kissed and regarded her with the fondest affection. "There is something strange even in you—sometimes I regard you with awe—who are you?"

"Not a princess in disguise," answered her friend, with somewhat of sternness, yet half sadly smiling, "but a poor wayfarer, whom fortune—I should say Providence, has blessed beyond her merits. Poorly born—obscure, unknown—the victim of a hapless sorrow in early womanhood—ever doomed to form strong attachments, and be torn from them when they had become necessary to my existence—even you I fear for—they will snatch you from my arms. Yet on—on—stern duty's behests must be obeyed."

Marie did not answer. She had often expressed a desire to know what this sudden change in her foster-mother's opinions and habits portended—but had as often been entreated to desist until such time as she thought proper to enlighten her, alleging such reasons that Marie, from motives of delicacy, ever refrained after that from pressing the subject. But what fancies!—what wonderful emotions were hers! So powerful that it is not strange if her cheek regained not its accustomed rose. She thought it might be that her parents lived—that her foster-mother had some clue to their whereabouts, that would perhaps soon be unravelled—but whether she was the child of lawful wedlock or not, was the question that oftenest recurred to her mind.

Mrs. Le Dunlap with her poetical temperament had always dealt in romantic surprises. Perhaps now she was planning some marvelous plot for her sole benefit. She had spoken of taking her to an humble but beautiful spot, where ran a sweet river along the margin of its boundary. She had spoken of an old man, who indeed might be dead—of blooming children and smiling matrons—perhaps *there* was her home, and there her parents. She thought till thought ached of what might be her feelings if in reality clasped to the heart of a mother. Could her love be greater than for her who for fifteen long years had every morning won her first smile, had heaped benefits upon her in such profusion that she could not count them; had taught her so tenderly and so carefully—had folded her to her heart with such transport of affection. And then she would wake up in the solemn midnight, and so lying indulge in innocent fancies. A bright vision stood before her with eyes that spoke more than mortal love, with fair, rounded limbs, over which soft drapery fell gracefully; with that holy thing dimpling her face, a mother's smile—with arms outstretched as if to grasp the object of her long, yearning desire; with pleasant words and all gentle caresses—and she would start sometimes from her pillow, exclaiming, "Mother, oh! mother, come and love me. It matters not how lowly you may be, I will, I *must* love you."

"To-morrow then," said Mrs. Le Dunlap, "we will start for the town of Bradley. I have sent on a sort of courier to bespeak places for us, for there is some kind of a great ceremony to take place, and all the inns will be filled."

It was a fair, moon-bright evening, and our travellers well wearied with sight-seeing, reclined before a pleasant fire, which the coolness of the atmosphere rendered agreeable. They had been talking of home, and an unquiet wish had been long formed in Marie's heart to see old friends, and among them, particularly, the noble mien of Frederic Le Dunlap. There he stood before her fancy the most radiant embodiment of manhood. There he stood with his deep, holy look, his fervent love written all over it—his nobility of soul stamped upon his front as unmistakably as the seal of God on all His works.

The door flew open, and still she mused, though the new-comer entered with a hasty step, for *he* was too present in all her thoughts to be lightly thrust aside; but suddenly raising her eyes, there indeed he stood with hand outstretched and asking glance, archly enjoying her innocent astonishment, as she wonderingly exclaimed, "It is not then a dream?"

"By no means," replied Frederic Le Dunlap, grasping one hand in both his, and raising it to his lips—"how shall I convince you?" he added, laughing heartily at Marie's still bewildered look. "But, come, let me explain the mystery of my appearance; do not move, dear sister, I prefer sitting humbly at Marie's feet—there! so, now I have you both in full view, and, really, is it the fire-light, or the moonlight, or both, makes you so very handsome to-night?"

"Come—come, tell us how you came here?" cried Mrs. Le Dunlap, whose surprise had been as great as Marie's.

"How?—why, good sister mine, in a staunch steamer direct from the old Dutch city called New York, in compliment to its founders, I believe—straight from New York over the great Atlantic—and that's how I came here. But I, true to teasing. I found after you had gone, that unavoidable business rendered it necessary for me to visit Germany—so I thought I would call in upon you, if I could find you—and you see I have been successful. By the way," he added, "I came in company with a very accomplished and intelligent lady," Marie, though almost unconsciously, opened her eyes wider at this remark—and a little glow of exultation spread itself over Frederic's cheek, but he continued, "She is vastly disappointed at not meeting with a relative who she was led to expect was here in this very hotel—but she finds by a letter remaining behind, that she has left for the celebrated Seltzer Springs in Germany, her health not having been improved by this climate. Let me beg you, dear sister, and you, Marie, to receive this lady as a friend; she feels very lonely here—shall I bring her?"

"By all means," replied Marie and her foster-mother—and Marie, as he left the room, dropped a curl or two lower on her rounded shoulders, and carelessly going out of her way to give one, just one very little glance at the tall mirror, and to compose the flutter of her spirits by gazing intently at the opposite chimnies, in the futile belief that she was looking at the moon.

Presently the young man returned with a lady of slight figure and agreeable address, gracefully presented her to Mrs. Le Dunlap and Marie, (the latter dismissing her fluttering fears on the instant) and in a few moments the two elderly ladies were cosily chatting together, while Marie and Frederic sat apart as uninteresting to a third person as lovers usually are.

"Is this noble-looking young man your son?" asked Mrs. Lanelon of her new-found friend.

"No, he is a brother-in-law," replied the other, glancing with pride toward him, "and he

who lies in the cold grave resembles him; only to a wife's fond eyes, he was even more lofty looking, more beautiful in feature and expression."

"He was very kind and attentive to me on our voyage; that beautiful girl—how much she reminds me of——"

"Who?" asked Mrs. Le Dunlap, nervously.

"A friend of mine, only she is so rosy and healthy, and happy-looking, which poor Lady Walden is not, and I fear never will be."

"Lady Walden!" exclaimed the other, scarcely moving her lips to speak, though they trembled perceptibly.

"Yes—and her life has been one long dirge of grief and sorrow. To look in her face you would think the hope even of life well nigh dead. Since the mysterious loss of her babe years ago—they say a smile has never crossed her features, or the faintest color suffused her face. I am sure she is a sad-hearted woman to whom the world offers no charm, and her husband——"

"Yes, what of him?" exclaimed Mrs. Le Dunlap, with dilated eye and heavy chest—"what of the monster who dared——" she ceased, conscious that her vehemence had drawn every eye toward her. Her companion was silent for a moment, then very mildly said,

"You labor under a mistake; the Baron of Waldenwold is quoted far and near as the exemplar of virtue and religion to simple and noble. His seat in the chapel is always filled—he has a chaplain constantly in his house—he gives no balls; indeed it is said that on the approaching freedom of young Lord Walden, who is hourly expected from the States, it is with the greatest reluctance that he makes a party for him, because the recollection of his infant daughter's birth-day fete is replete with pain and anguish. He spends his time in doing good deeds, and much more in alms-giving. It was but recently that he bestowed upon a poor farmer who lost his all by fire—let me see," she added, taking from her reticule a letter, "here my cousin tells me—oh, yes, here it is—Conrad Goldfinch, who was with his wife and seven children turned out of house and home by one of the most terrible fires ever known in the county—yes," she continued, refolding the letter, not noting the ghastly face of her listener, "he gave him out and out a good, well-stocked farm, and——"

"And did he accept it—did he—*could* he do so mean, so *dastardly* an act?" cried Mrs. Le Dunlap, her whole frame quivering.

"Why!—accept it? Ask if a man with seven children turned into the street without a shelter from the cold storm—ask if he will *accept* an

offer to him almost princely! Certainly he did, as I should."

"Then I would never own—then—then—oh! how could he take *one* favor from that man's hand?" exclaimed Mrs. Le Dunlap, in a voice of anguish. "You will think me insane," she quickly added, seeing that her visitor cautiously moved her chair away—"but I—I, unfortunately, happen to be in possession of knowledge that—that he would fain were looked from every human bosom but his own. But pray forgive me for interrupting you as I have—in time perhaps you will understand why your narrative has so deeply affected me; then the poor Lady Walden is, after the long lapse of eighteen years, still inconsolable."

"You knew the circumstance at the time then?" asked her visitor, interrogatively.

"I—yes—I heard—I knew," replied the other, with slight confusion, but suddenly regaining all her self-possession, she added, "I knew the family, and it is for the purpose of visiting them at their home in Bradley, Waldenwold, that I have brought Marie."

"Indeed! but did you not know that they have just left London to travel in Germany? They were here on the ninth—had a suite of apartments in this hotel—and, I am informed by my cousin who left only three days ago, in the letter I found here, that Lady Walden is in such extremely low spirits, that her physicians think only change of scene and climate can keep her alive; she is, therefore, going to her home in Germany, stopping by the way at the Seltzer Springs some few days to recruit. But poor creature, I fear her sojourn is almost over on earth."

"We will go to Germany, Marie," exclaimed Mrs. Le Dunlap, turning to her foster-daughter.

"That is good news, mamma," replied the fair girl.

"Capital," cried Frederic, springing from his seat, "and I shall take you all under my escort. Say we start to-morrow."

"That is my plan," returned Mrs. De Dunlap, looking intently at the fading fire, and consulting her watch, she instantly added, "come, we must all retire early if we have to pack—pity to spoil such a *tele-a-tele*," and she looked laughingly at Marie and her lover, "but by-and-bye I shall not be in the way, and you can chat all night if you will."

"Hold her down, Frederic—what an enthusiast! she will be in the road yet."

"Oh! such a sunset—such a sunset," cried the enraptured girl, clapping her hands with

delight—"such hills! such a sparkling river! such vineyards—after all, I love Germany better than England—Germany for me, dear mother."

"And you have been here only forty-eight hours," said Mrs. Le Dunlap, laughing; "what will you say when you see old Coblenz, the gloomy Hartz, the——"

The sound of that light laugh had not yet died on the air—the words had scarcely fallen from the tongue when a heavy shock was felt; the carriage settled forward with a violent jerk, and in springing to his feet, thinking that Marie was in danger, Frederic was thrown from his seat over against the forward wheel, and in attempting to get out of the way his ankle was severely sprained.

Meanwhile Mrs. Le Dunlap and Marie were loudly expressing their grief, and the driver with German oaths, cursing the vehicle that dared to use so much independence as to drop a wheel just then and there—no hotel in sight—night coming on.

"What shall we do?" was reiterated again and again—"now this is really a strange Providence," said Mrs. Le Dunlap, "interrupted even in the most merciful designs—frustrated in all our attempts to bring peace to the breaking heart—why is it so?"

"You have often told me I should never murmur against Providence, however dark its ministrations may be," rejoined Marie, gently. "Now look, what a fine house that is yonder, if it were not for poor Frederic's foot we might easily walk there. No doubt its inmates are benevolent—can you fix the wheel, driver?" she asked, in German.

He replied that he thought he could with some large nails, if they could be obtained, and suggested that he had better go to the house and try to get some assistance.

Frederic tried his best to step out bravely, but in vain—his foot had swollen much; every movement forced from him a groan of pain, and they were all relieved when an open carriage was seen coming rapidly from the distant cottage.

"Is any one hurt?" asked a young man, reining in his horses as he arrived opposite the little group.

They briefly explained the accident.

"I am extremely sorry," he said, politely, "I had just returned home when I saw that something was the matter, and hurried on. Will you be pleased to accept the tender of our house and services, at least for to-night," he added, gracefully.

With much gratitude the little party acknowledged his kindness, and all were seated in the

carriage, and driven rapidly toward the hospitable mansion. Soon comfortably installed, a surgeon was procured, and Frederic's foot set and bandaged, himself consigned to a pleasant, spacious chamber, Mrs. Le Dunlap introduced to the matron of the house; and Marie quite interested in a conversation with her daughter, a lovely girl of sixteen. Dividing her attentions between Frederic and Miss Helen, the time passed most agreeably to, her, novice as she was, and as the lady declared that while the least lameness remained, they must make that their home; and Mrs. Le Dunlap, uneasy as she was at the delay, had not the power of controlling events—they settled down quite like members of the family. One day Frederic was just able to walk to the summer-house, a delightful place, embowered with shrubs and flowers. Marie and Helen led him sportively along—one on each side—but Marie had forgotten to bring a book, and leaving him with her young friend walked back to the house. A carriage had stopped at the park—she noticed it not, but hurriedly entered the parlor, where she thought she saw her foster-mother, who she had left quietly writing, dressed as if for a walk, and talking with their hostess.

Somewhat astonished, she exclaimed, "Why, mother, how you must have hurried—and where are you going so early?"

The woman, or vision smiled, and turned to the lady of the house, who said, "My dear, this is not your mother, though I can hardly wonder you should think so, for really there is a most extraordinary likeness, I noticed it when Mrs. Le Dunlap first came; I hurried to give her the salutation of a friend, even, and was as much astonished as I could be to find a perfect stranger."

"I am bewildered," replied Marie, still gazing at the lady—"why you have mamma's very eyes and features—the same expression—the same height and figure—you must be her."

The stranger again smiled, and the hostess said, "It is really astonishing, the more I look the greater the resemblance grows; if you were twin sisters you could not be more alike."

At the words twin sisters the brow of the stranger flushed, then grew pallid again, a singular expression partly of sadness, and yet like remorse, passed over her features, she regarded Marie attentively, and commanding her voice as with an effort, asked, "What is your mother's name my dear?"

"Le Dunlap," answered Marie.

"What was her name before her marriage, I mean?"

"I think it was Goldfinch," replied the young

girl, casting a glance of apprehension at the hostess—for at the mention of that name a sudden spasm seemed to contract the woman's handsome features, and she gazed vaguely at Marie, and yet with an expression which wanted only the power to make itself comprehended. Slowly as one in a dream she recovered, shivered slightly, and taking from her reticule a card, traced a line thereon, begging Marie to give it to her mother. And then quite agitated again, she asked Marie to stand a moment before her to let her hold her hand—and Marie noted that in her grasp it shook like an aspen. Eagerly as if devouring them with her eyes she scanned her features, all the while controlling some powerful impulse—then slowly dropped her hand, called her attention to the request, said good morning, and took her departure.

On the card which Marie gave Mrs. Le Dunlap were traced the words, "I will send my carriage to-morrow at four. Come to me if you would give comfort to the wretched."

"What does this mean?" asked her foster-mother, reading it in wonder.

"I know not, unless you are capable of assuming two characters at one and the same time," said Marie, pausing again as she hurried to rejoin Frederic in the bower, "for truly as I live, I can hardly believe you are not the very person I met just now down stairs—have you a sister, mother?"

"I had one," replied Mrs. Le Dunlap, in a cold, bitter tone, "but I was robbed of her—would God it had been by death alone—never mind, Marie, leave me by myself now, I am writing," she added, somewhat petulantly. "Doubtless," she went on as Marie vanished, "something with reference to this dear girl, about whom my soul has absolutely wound itself—some casual remark—some petty scandal—perhaps I—I myself am known—known and suspected. Could I but irrevocably bind her to myself—could the marriage be consummated, and now, there would be nothing dishonest in that, and she would return with us. Yet still, the mother—the mother, and her ignorance of her exalted station, and my injustice toward her—no, no, all must be weighed. I began with good intentions—for the first time for years I enjoy the peace of a good conscience—shall I disturb it now?—never, God helping me."

Precisely at the stroke of four, next day, the stranger's carriage drove up to the door. Mrs. Le Dunlap alone, and not without trepidation, entered and was driven to a large and stately mansion, where a servant introduced her into an apartment princely in adornment, and darkened

sufficiently to impart a rich and splendid sombreness to the beautiful furniture.

"How like my own taste," she thought, gazing at the graceful designs of the pattern on the wall, the chaste sculpture, the extremely beautiful paintings, the light and trailing pattern of the carpets, the easy and elegant disposal of couch and *fauteuil*, "surely there is nothing German in all this—it is purely English—who can this mysterious personage be?"

The door opened—she sprang to her feet, and stood as if paralyzed at the reflection of her own image. Not so the other—she came forward with trembling, anxious steps, held her hand out irresolutely, then dropped it, while the tears gathered in her eyes, and in another moment she sank, as if fainting, upon a seat.

There was silence, broken first by Mrs. Le Dunlap.

"If my twin sister had not for years slept in the grave," she was about to add, when with a cold chill came the consciousness, (it had never struck her so forcibly before,) that in no grave had that fair body been laid, that even the silent waters had never given back the beautiful, dead form.

"Hear what I solemnly assert," cried the other, holding forth her arms, her cheeks growing like the snow, "that in the town of Bradley, I have, if he be living, an old father, by name Abel Goldfinch, a sister called Ruth——"

"Gracious heaven, I am she," cried Mrs. Le Dunlap, falling within her sister's extended arms. "No, it cannot be—you are not—and yet my heart tells me it is my own blood that beats in yours. Still, how shall I believe? Oh! my sister, my sister, it is indeed you, and God has permitted it all."

Pale, and cold as marble, were the lips she passionately pressed, and for moments nothing was heard but low sobs.

"Is it thus that you receive me?" murmured the other, faintly, "I who disgraced you, my sister—I dare not believe it—it is too much—too much happiness."

"Believe that I love you—have always loved you—will love you till I die; believe that in thus finding you, I gain new life—new hope—new joy; that earth looks no longer desolate—that the one void in my heart, so long vacant, is filled with such delicious happiness that I, a criminal as much as you, am at last forgiven by that heaven against which I so recklessly sinned. But explain this vision, for is it not a sweet dream from which I shall wake by-and-bye? Tell me all—how you escaped us—why you are here—tell me quickly?"

"It is long since I reverted to these melancholy years," said the sister, lovingly holding the other's hand, "at least by language; for never has memory allowed it to be absent from my mind—no, not for the very moments when sleep has visited me like an uneasy ghost. During that terrible time, language can never express what were my feelings; there seemed lodged in my breast a burning, a scathing iron that made me gasp for breath, that drove me to the distracted thought of self-destruction, from which I could not tear myself. Many a night when you, pale watcher, deemed me sleeping, I have been in that torture which I know only lost spirits can feel, so exquisite in its infliction that the racked flesh, torn by instruments, would have felt a palsied sense of anguish compared with it. At last it drove me nearly distracted. No expiation seemed to my burning brain sufficiently equal to my crime. I had been so tenderly cared for—I had, from my infancy, been so well and clearly shown the evil effects of crime—I seemed hideous to myself—a blot on nature. At last I resolved to rashly throw my life away. Night after night I laid awake maturing my plan; and when I had prevailed on you, for the first time, to leave me and seek a night's quiet rest—I knew my babe," she paused, violently agitated, "would sleep soundly, nor betray its vile mother. So I arose, weak as I was; a new strength seemed gradually to be infused into my poor limbs. I knelt first by my babe, and solemnly vowed that never would I look upon its dear face again—never, never would I behold the parent whose grey hairs I had sprinkled with a sorrow that would carry him to the grave—never would I behold you, or the scenes of my infancy. I severed my curls from my head—proud that I had been of their glossy sheen—I gathered my letters, my little mementoes, and left them for you. Then I kissed the babe—I thought how you would care for it—how it would never know from your kind lips the secret of its birth—how it never would be cursed by the presence of its wretched mother—I kissed it—oh, heaven! the memory of that moment! Then softly I stole from that dear home of my birth, venturing only to look in, where slept my father—and, oh! Ruth, I could have shrieked at the expression that moment crossing his features; and he groaned—groaned in his sleep, and the thought that I had brought this heavy sorrow on the happiest household—that I was its blight, its destroyer, gave wings to my despair. I held my breath and fled from the house; soon I found myself on the banks of the deep river, whose tide flows so strongly to the ocean. I threw off

my hat, my mantle; I took off my shoes, and was just plunging in, when—Ruth, I shall believe it to my dying day—I saw *mother*, clad as she was in her coffin, rising from the solemn wave, and throwing her hands forward, as she said, in a hollow voice, ‘*back, child, back.*’ I seem to behold her this moment, with glistening eyes, and clear, polished brow, the moon shining through and through her wondrously white garments—Ruth, I *saw* her, and she saved me. God sent her to save His lost child. I know I knelt down there—my limbs lost all their power of motion till *she* had faded—faded away. Then my will grew strong again; I sprang to my feet; I essayed to plunge, when I felt her hand cold on my shoulder, and I fled on the wings of fear from that terrible spot. Ruth, I think I must have so ran till morning. I only remember that it was broad day when I found myself in a little cottage, miles from my home, where everybody about me was wondering who I was, and I was gazed upon as some fearful thing. I heard them speak of my hair, and hint that I must have made my escape from some mad-house, and so the first chance I could get, I sprang from my bed, though my feet were bare and sore, and made my way from the house. After that, it seems to me, I wandered months through woods and vallies, living on berries, laughing and talking to myself, shunning my kind, crossing rivers, I know not how, until again I forgot life in insensibility. Ruth, I *had* been mad, but I knew it not until one morning, I remember I felt like a little infant, so weak and powerless, and one by one came the strangest thoughts thronging through my shattered mind. I found myself, as recollection and perception grew stronger, in a grand, large room, furnished with the utmost splendor. I was conscious that some one was near; I strove to speak—to sigh, and I was successful. A hand moved aside the light curtains, and a face that looked like a glimpse of heaven broke upon my loneliness. It was the face of a middle-aged man; its whole expression was refined intellectuality, the hair was parted over the forehead, slightly sprinkled with grey; the eyes were large, deep and placid; in short, you see the face before you,” and she pointed to a portrait, enclosed in a massive frame. “I threw myself on his charity; and when, in his peculiarly soft voice, he asked of me my history, I told him. Oh! if I was grieved, I was not ashamed to tell *him*, he seemed so like a mediator; to my excited fancy, he was as the blessed Saviour himself; but remember I was very weak—I was in that state in which actual things take the hue of visions—I could not tell whether it

was I, living and thinking, or whether some other soul had entered into my frame. Only one thought was real to me—I had left my child *forever*—that brought tears and sobs, and for awhile emotion threatened my life. Although several times repeating my sad history, I never gave a clue to my name or residence.

“Your tears, your penitence are enough, my poor girl,” said that melting voice, ‘a contrite heart He will not despise. I will ask of you no further of your sad history, but here you are welcome to remain. Matilda,’ he added, turning from the bed, and at sound of her name a mild-faced woman came to my side, and tenderly laid her hand on mine, ‘be like a mother to her, Matilda, while I am gone,’ he said, ‘she is a repentant Magdalene—a sinning being, whose sin, let us humbly hope, has been forgiven.’

“This he spoke—held his hand out, and gently shook mine, and was gone. Very slowly I recovered—first to walk feebly about my new home, then to move out upon the balcony, then the open green. The housekeeper, Matilda, ever forbore to question me, cared for me in a tender and motherly way, and when I was quite recovered, though I besought her with tears to let me go and work with my hands for the bread of which I was unworthy, she would hear nothing of it. ‘I am lonesome here,’ she invariably added. ‘I once had a daughter like you—at all times you remind me of her—so you must stay. And as to work, why there is plenty to do. Here are jellies and preserves of all kinds to put up—the poor to look after—Mr. Guilame, our good master’s orphan school to attend to. Oh! trust me, you need never be idle here.’

“Well, sister, five years chastened my grief; I became through the silent working of a power that the most hardened reverence if they do not obey—a Christian. Not once had I broken my resolve, though night and day one name was ever on my heart—the name of my child—and as if a blessed horn were permitted me, because of my weary hours of repentance and suffering—it seemed ever to me as if the babe hovered still about me. I have at times so distinctly felt her presence, that my heart trembled as it asked the question, is the babe an angel?—oh, my sister, if that beautiful being I yesterday saw, whose hand in my grasp thrilled every nerve in my body with a subtle, but exquisite pain, if she be my child—it is not so; I see by your look, your manner, and my little one has gone—went early; am I not right?”

“She was scarcely a year when she died,” answered Ruth, much agitated, yet as much astonished at her sister’s calmness.

A long silence intervened, during which the other seemed struggling to keep her composure, and when she spoke, she said, "I thank God that He took her to himself in her innocence—she did not live to blight instead of bless society—she is a dear lamb before His throne—but, sister, tell me of yourself—how well you look—how ~~blest~~ you are in the love of such a child—tell me all from the moment I left you."

"First tell *me* if this good benefactor still lives?" inquired her sister.

"No—he died seven years ago, after blessing me with his love in wedded happiness only three; alas! what have I not lost in him?"

"How singular that our fortunes should be so

much alike," responded her sister—and she related her own life, while the other listened with her hand still in hers.

It had grown nearly dark when this strange, unlooked-for interview drew near its close. Again and again did these newly-found sisters embrace at their leave-taking—and it was settled that as soon as Ruth's important mission, the nature of which, by-the-way, she did not so much as hint at, was concluded, they should again meet; or perhaps, Rose said, she would accompany her sister to the home of her birth, though she shrank from recognition by any of her family.

(TO BE CONCLUDED.)

THE BOUND GIRL.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

[Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by Edward Stephens, in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.]

CHAPTER I.

THE sick ward of a hospital, mockingly, it would seem, called Bellevue. The room was long, low in the ceiling, and lighted by a range of windows sunk deep in the wall, which overlooked the East river and an expanse of Long Island that curved along the opposite shore.

A few poverty-stricken women, and some worse than that, because bowed down by shame as well as poverty, had sought this ward as the only place in which their anguish and sorrow could find shelter.

Narrow, pauper cots, furnished with straw beds and covered with coarse, checked cotton, were ranged down each side of the room, with just space enough between to allow a sort of foot-path in which the nurses could pass from one cot to another. Every cot was occupied. Here a young face, so pale and mournful that your heart ached while gazing on it, was turned sadly toward you on the straw pillow, or a feeble hand would make an effort to draw up the coverlet that you might not mark the flush of shame that stole over her forehead, or discover the cause of that shame which lay nestled in her bosom.

Other faces met your view, coarse and shameless, or haggard with long suffering; and some turned upon you eyes so full of gentle submission, that you wondered why human beings so opposite in their nature, should be crowded together in one room, even by poverty.

Sounds, in painful harmony with the scene, greeted your entrance. Murmurs of sharp impatience, imprecations suppressed only by fear, and open complaints from the coarser and ruder inmates, drowned the sighs and timid whispers of maternal love that gave a breath of heaven even to that miserable place.

Two cots in the room, both standing in a remote corner, were occupied like the rest, but gave forth no signs of life. They stood close together, and of the occupants it seemed impossible to say which was the palest, or which was actually dead, so coldly white were the two faces that gleamed upon you from their pillows.

Both were young, and one was wondrously beautiful even in that deathly state, when forehead, hands and lips were blanched to the whiteness of a corpse. The other was less beautiful, but very young, and so fragile that you wondered why death had waited to find her in that miserable place, for she *was* dead. The grey shadows settling like a mist upon her face, the locked whiteness of her features, the imperceptible stiffening of her white hand upon the coverlet, all proclaimed this truth with terrible distinctness. But there was yet a breath of life close to her heart, a faint flutter as if a wounded bird had folded its wings forever, and then all was quiet as if sleep were there, or death had come twice. The grey shadows of a winter's morning crept through the checked curtains of a neighboring window, and hung coldly around that pauper couch; and amid the muttering of patients restless with fever, or clamorous for nourishment, the wail of sickly infants, and the outcries of healthy ones, this poor young creature died and grew cold, unwatched and unwept. And the other, she who lay so like an exquisite statue on the neighboring couch, would no life ever return to her? There was a faint motion of the bed-clothes, as if life still lingered there, but did it exist in that fair young mother or in the child, for she too was a mother, and even in the chill of insensibility she held the little being into which her own seemed to have merged; clasped to her bosom.

Just as the day dawned, a nurse came into the ward, not with her usual dauntless step, but stealthily, and casting sidelong glances from cot to cot, like a panther fearing to arouse his prey. She stopped once or twice and arranged the pillows of her patients, with a sort of cajoling attention, always leaving their faces turned from the corner where those two young creatures lay. Then she stole softly between the two cots, and bending down her face till her soiled curl-papers almost touched the dead, listened, touched the cold hand on the coverlet, and cautiously turned down the clothes.

The woman scarcely breathed, but stood

upright again, casting furtive glances down the ward. All was quiet, save the murmurs of a child, far down the room, who was struggling to keep its place in the arms of a drowsy mother.

The nurse was relieved by this sound. It gave her time for breath. The rustle of her own dress seemed less startling. She turned to the other bed, stooped over it still more cautiously, and laid her hand down upon the heart of the senseless woman.

She half rose, gave a sharp glance over her shoulder, and taking each of the fair hands, clasped so fondly around the treasure, she forced them gently apart, and lifted the child from its mother's bosom.

A shudder passed through the frame of that young mother, as if the last gleam of life had been torn from her heart. Her eyeballs quivered, and her lips were, for an instant, faintly convulsed. The nurse turned suddenly to the other couch, and back again, while this life struggle was going on. Without unclosing her eyes, the poor creature reached forth her arms, and clasped them fondly again with a sigh of ineffable delight and sunk away motionless, and without a perceptible breath.

But it was not for joy. As the child, a moment before, had seemed to drain the vitality from her heart with its own warmth, so now some outward chill drove back the blood to its centre. With a moan and a struggle, she came to life, opened her great, blue eyes and fixed them wildly on the nurse.

"I am cold, oh! so cold," she said, shivering, and cowering down into the bed, "what have you done to me?"

"Done to you?" said the nurse, faintly, "done to you? Nothing, but try my best to bring you to. Why, it's almost dead you've been, I don't know how long."

The invalid did not hear this. A momentary impulse of strength seized upon her. She flung back the bed-clothes, and bending her face downward, fixed those wild eyes upon the child. One glance, and she lifted them with a sharp, questioning look to the woman, and passing her hand over the little face, whispered hoarsely, "What is this?"

The nurse put her hands down and touched the infant. The poor mother felt those coarse hands shaking against her own, and shrunk away with a faint cry: it seemed as if they had inflicted some wound upon her.

It was some moments before the woman spoke. When she did, it was with a sort of unnatural quickness, accompanied with hurried glances down the room.

"Where's the doctor? It might have been expected. Fainting fits all night—overlaid and smothered it. Half on your face when I came in—arms grasped around it like a vice. No wonder it's cold."

"Cold. Is that all—only cold?" cried the mother, trembling all over, "only cold?"

"Cold as a stone, and dead as a door nail, that's what it is!" answered the nurse, sharply, for that moment the physician of the ward came in sight, and the nurse judged well of the effect her brutal speech would have on the young creature.

With a cry, that in her feebleness scarcely arose above a wail, she fell back perfectly senseless again.

"What is the trouble here?" inquired the doctor, coming forward. "Oh, I expected this!" he added, glancing at the dead, "scarcely a breath of life in her from the first. The baby too, I suppose."

"No!" answered the nurse, quickly, "that poor creature has lost her baby. Hers is just alive yet, I wish they wouldn't send such delicate creatures here. It's enough to destroy one's character to have them die off so."

"But she is not dead," replied the doctor, pressing between the two cots, and taking the little hand that had fallen away from the child, "almost as bad though; a hard chill—we shall have fever next! Take the child away. No wonder she feels cold! How long has it been dead?"

"It was cold when I came in."

"Well, well, have it removed. She will never come to with that chilling her to the heart."

"And the other baby?" questioned the nurse, anxiously.

"Give it to some of these women to nurse, till something can be done; and order two coffins. They mustn't lie here, or we shall have a panic among the patients."

The nurse made an effort to take the child once more from its mother's arms; but, for the first time, she seemed nervous and reluctant to touch the dead, till the doctor startled her, saying impatiently,

"There, be quick, or the woman will die! That will do—now let me see if anything can put life into her? Poor thing, poor thing. It's a pity the baby is dead—but then what chance has an orphan in this world?—better dead, if she could only be brought to think so!"

While he was talking, the nurse bent suddenly to the floor and snatched up a small, silken bag, which, suspended by a braid chain, had been torn from the invalid's neck when the babe was

first removed from her arms. The doctor turned his eyes that way.

"I am always dropping this pin-cushion from my side!" she said, hurriedly, gathering up the chain in her hand, "there is no keeping any thing in its place."

"Don't stop for such nonsense," cried the physician, impatiently, "or the woman will die under our hands."

The nurse thrust the silken chain and its appendage into her bosom, and began in earnest to render assistance. The poor young creature was aroused at length from the cold torpor that had seized upon her; but she awoke to a hot flush of fever, raving with pathetic wildness of a thousand things which no one comprehended—of a husband that had left her in the depths of trouble, of the child that she fancied herself clasping, and of the nurse who seemed forever and ever over her bed, as she persisted in thinking, like a great, black statue that had chilled her heart to death beneath its shadow. Thus she raved and muttered, while the fever kindled wilder and hotter within her veins, and her eyes grew star-like in the glittering brightness.

Hour after hour she kept up these mental wanderings, and then sunk away again.

Meantime the nurse had been very restless under the doctor's eye, and negligent beyond precedent when he was away. But for the kindly interposition of a convalescent patient in the ward, the poor invalid must have perished from inattention, if not from positive violations of all medical rules.

The woman of whom we speak was a plump, wholesome, little Irish dame, with the freshest face and warmest heart that ever looked poverty in the face.

She had entered the hospital quietly and grateful for the asylum thus provided for her in time of need. In the depths of winter, with three little children "to the fare," as she said, and the husband without a hand's turn of work, what had she to do eating up the bread that was but half enough to keep the hunger from so many clamorous mouths. Why shouldn't she take herself to the hospital thankfully, while the good man—for want of better work—minded the children at home? Mary Margaret Dillon had no pride in the matter, not she. Bellevue, in her estimation, belonged to the people, John possessed a right to vote among the sovereigns and had paid taxes, for which his landlord took the credit, in the shape of exorbitant rents for the last ten years. Thus he had secured, as she considered it, a lean upon at least one humble straw bed in the hospital, and of that she took

possession with as little feeling of humiliation as beset Victoria when she mounted the throne of England.

When the scene, we have just described, happened, Mary Margaret, who had neither lost her roses or her cheerfulness, was sitting upon the side of her cot, striving with her active little hands to remedy the fit of a scant calico dress in which her fourth born was arrayed. As she sat thus, smiling fondly upon the infant, and finding a world of beauty in its plump face and tiny red hands, the buxom mother would have made a capital model for one of Reuben's Madonnas.

"Isn't it a darlint?" she murmured, touching each velvet cheek daintily with the tip of her finger, pressing up her lips and emitting a succession of audible kisses upon the air, the sound of which almost brought the first smiles to her baby's mouth.

"Isn't it a wonder and a beauty, with its diamond black eyes and elegant hair, like his father before him?" she continued, stretching the little fellow across her lap, and striving to cover the tiny feet that would peep out from beneath the coarse dress, by two or three vigorous pulls at the skirt. "Won't the children be dancing with joy when they get us home again, and John, faith, but he'll never grumble that there's another mouth to fill—barring the year when its in arms, poor crathur—for the blessed Virgin that sent the baby 'll find work for us long afore it 'll have teeth for the praties, sure."

Thus the good woman and unconscious philosopher muttered to herself, as she sought to redeem her babe from the unbecoming effects of his pauper dress—winding its silken hair around the tips of her fingers, and coaxing it to smile with kisses and gentle touches of the cheek between whiles, she continued her murmurs of gentle fondness, happy as a mother bird upon her nest.

She had tied the awkward sleeves down from its shoulders with knots of faded pink ribbon, taken from her own cap, and was holding it at arm's length with a broad smile of triumph, when the nurse passed the cot with her checked apron folded over some object that she held to her bosom.

"What have ye there, Mrs. Post, saving yer priseness?" inquired Mary Margaret, holding her baby poised in mid air, and turning her kindly eyes upon the nurse. "It isn't dead, sure?"

"She is," answered the nurse, nodding her head toward the cot.

Mary Margaret held her breath, and tears stole to her eyes as she stood up, trembling

beneath the weight of her infant, and looked toward the pale face of the dead.

"And the poor, young crathur in the cot alongside, what has happened to her?" inquired Mary Margaret.

"She's as good as dead, don't you hear how she raves? Mutter—mutter, she hasn't strength for more: all the doctors on earth couldn't save her."

"And her baby?" asked Mary Margaret, filled with compassion, and hugging her own child fondly to her bosom.

"Oh! that's yonder by the dead woman, cold as she is!"

Mary Margaret held her child closer, and the tears streamed down her face.

"Give me a look at the motherless crathur," she said, laying her child upon the cot, and reaching forth her arms.

The nurse hesitated an instant, and then flung back her apron from the face of the infant.

"Poor thing, poor thing, how deathly it looks, what great, wild eyes! How it stares at one!" exclaimed Mary Margaret, sobbing.

"It's half starved," answered the nurse, looking down upon her burden with a callous smile, "it won't feed. To-night will see the end on't."

Mary Margaret glanced at her own sleeping child, and then turned her burning eyes upon the other.

"Give it here," she said, "there's enough for both—give him here."

The nurse frowned and drew up her apron.

"The doctor must settle that. It's not my business, Mrs. Dillon," she said, harshly.

"The doctor! Well, where is he? Be quick and ask him, or let me."

"When he comes in the morning will be time enough," answered the nurse, preparing to move on.

"The morning! Why the poor crathur 'll be gone afore that," persisted the kind woman, stepping a pace forward, and supporting herself with difficulty. "Let me have it, I say?"

The nurse jerked her arm from the feeble grasp laid upon it, and harshly bade the woman return to her bed and mind her own business.

Mary Margaret tottered back and sat down upon the foot of her couch.

"It 'll die, it 'll die afore the blessed day is over," she muttered, sadly, for her maternal heart ached over the orphan. "Arrah, is the doctor won only to the fare?"

She ended this pitiful exclamation with a joyful cry of, "The saints be praised, here he is, welcome as cowslips in spring," and regardless of her feeble state, she arose and stood ready

to address the doctor, as he came down the ward.

The nurse uttered a sharp exclamation, in which an oath was but half smothered, and advancing firmly toward the cot, flung the famished child down by the sleeping babe of Mary Margaret.

"There, take the last!" she said, with an unnatural laugh, "I meant that you should nurse it all the time, if you hadn't teased one's life out about it."

Mary Margaret did not answer, her limbs were trembling like aspens, and she sunk upon the cot overpowered with fatigue. Drawing the little stranger softly to her bosom, she watched its great eyes turned upon her own, till, as if struck by the same mesmeric influence, the woman and the infant slumbered together, a sweet picture of helplessness and charity, a noble proof that no human being can find a place so humble upon earth, that some good to others may not be wrought out of it.

As the woman and children lay thus, buried in that gentle sleep, which sometimes falls like dew after a good action. The lifeless young creature was lifted from her pauper death-bed, and carried forth to be stretched in the still more poverty-stricken pine coffin. Then the marble form of the infant was carelessly carried after, and Catharine Lacy followed it with her wild, bright eyes, and laughed as the door closed.

CHAPTER II.

LATE in the evening, after the scene we have just described, the hospital nurse, who had been an evil actor in it, stood with a smoking lamp in her hand in a closet or store-room where the patients' garments were kept. From one of the shelves she took a bundle tied up in a coarse woollen shawl, and drew forth a long merino cloak that evidently found its origin in old Ireland. She folded the cloak cautiously around her, then selecting a bonnet from a score or two that filled a side press, she tied a green veil closely over it and extinguished her lamp, finding her way out by the glow of its smouldering wick, and leaving a cloud of offensive smoke to deepen the already unpleasant atmosphere of the room.

The woman had evidently intended to disguise herself, and she stole like a thief down the dark passages of the building, avoiding the officers and keeping close to the shadow whenever she came within the range of a light, like one who feared to be seen.

At last she came out into the grounds in front of the hospital. The moon was up, but hidden

occasionally by masses of clouds that cumbered the sky with a darkness that threatened snow. The woman waited under the shadow of the steps till a heap of these clouds had completely obscured the moon, and then darted out, taking a central walk that leads from the principal entrance to Bellevue down to the water.

A grape-arbor runs half way down this walk, covering it, even in winter, with a thousand gnarled and twisted vines, that keep the light away and afford that obscurity of which she seemed so desirous.

Here she paused, and heaving a deep breath, walked more leisurely forward, drawing her veil closer, and folding the cloak over her garments more resolutely as she approached the open grounds again.

As she came forth, the moon had waded half through the bank of clouds, that had overwhelmed it for a moment, and began to pour its faint silver along their edges, a sight beautiful to look upon, but very repulsive to the woman, who wanted no light and could expect no beauty on the dark path she had begun to tread.

Resolved to be in advance of the threatened illumination, she darted in a slanting direction across a range of garden beds, that lay, a mass of trodden mud and decaying vegetable stumps, between her and the southern wall.

Again she was in safety, though the moon had rolled forth into the clear of the sky once more, and all around was dimly illuminated. She stood in the shadow cast by a low, stone building, half buried behind heaps of coal, empty barrels, and all sorts of refuse lumber that had been allowed to accumulate in that portion of the grounds.

Another might have trembled and shrunk back appalled from the position in which this woman found herself, so late at night, in the very presence of death, for the atmosphere was heavy and so oppressive, that even in the clear cold of the night, a faintness crept over her not from fear, not from any over excitement of the nerves, but purely from the unwholesome air that she breathed.

She knew that the low, stone building was heaped with dead bodies, prepared for burial with such scant care as the pauper dead receive. She knew also that there was an epidemic in the hospital, and that this store-house of mortality was unusually crowded; but this gave her no uneasiness, and she shook off the sickness that oppressed her, with a sort of scorn, as if she and death had become too familiar for him to take such liberties with her.

The effect, which habit produces upon a coarse

nature, was repulsively visible here. The woman stood within a narrow path, over which the dead-house flung its repulsive shadow. On the other side the moonbeams fell, grim and ghastly, on double rows of rough pine coffins, lifted endwise, and arranged in hideous proximity, so far as the dim light would permit her to see.

Thus between these hollow receptacles prepared for the dead, and death itself, the woman walked. The moonlight revealing the suggestive horror on one hand, while a dense shadow and a thick wall of stone shut out the real horror close by.

But what cared the hospital nurse for this? The coffins on her right, so glistening and ghastly, were nothing but a heap of pine boards fashioned in a fantastic shape to her. The building nothing more than a pile of stone, which cast a convenient shadow for her to walk in. She rather resented the closeness of the atmosphere, but scorned to walk faster, and snuffed it with a sort of defiant toss of the head, muttering that "she could stand anything, and wasn't to be frightened by shadows, not she!"

Thus, picking her steps leisurely, she went down this valley of death; and secure of not being discovered from the hospital windows, passed through a gate, in the wall near the water, which had most conveniently been left unlocked by the porter.

Once free of the hospital walls, Jane Kelly moved on with more resolution. An omnibus stood at its station on one of the avenues. She entered it, and seating herself in an extreme corner, subsided, to all appearance, into a state of passive indifference. The omnibus heaved and rumbled on its way, receiving here and there a woman of the lower classes, or a half intoxicated man passing home to his family after a primary meeting or a reunion in some corner grocery.

The hospital nurse got out where Nassau street verges from Chatham, and disappeared after walking half a dozen blocks down one of the cross streets. We find her again threading her way up through the darkness of a large building, divided into offices and rooms of various sizes, mostly untenanted at that hour of the night. The passages were profoundly dark; the staircases narrow, and winding in and out with no regard to architectural rules; in some places considerably out of repair, while in others bits of coal and pea-nut husks crouched under foot, and gave evidence of a general state of untidiness perceptible even in the dark.

At last the woman came to a wooden door, at which she paused. A gleam of light came

through a crevice over the threshold, and struggled around an iron key half turned in the lock, and with this came a faint noise as of some person moving within.

Jane Kelly knocked at this door, rather timidly, as if she were a little uncertain if it were the place she sought.

There was no answer. But the noise of a moving chair, and a shuffle of feet as if approaching the door, kept Jane Kelly stationary. After some delay the door was partially opened, and a face looked through.

"Who are you? What do you want here with a veil on that nobody can see through? Go away," said a sharp, angry voice.

"You told me to come!" said the woman, lifting her veil and bending forward that her features might be seen.

"Not at this time of night," cried the voice, which now exhibited a slightly foreign accent; and, without having really seen the face presented for her inspection, she was about to close the door entirely.

"You don't know me. I came from Bellevue," said the nurse, "you told me to come, and I'm here."

"Bellevue, Bellevue. Oh! and in the night. Come in, come in—has anything happened?—anybody dead, hey?"

The door was flung open more generously, and the visitor half pulled, half invited through.

"There, there, sit down," cried its inmate, sweeping a lean, grey cat from the rush-bottom of an old chair with one broken arm, and presenting it to her guest in a quick, eager way.

"Any news?—anything to tell? Why should you come so late? Why don't you speak?"

"Yes, I've got news. It's all over——"

"What! Dead? Really dead? But which of 'em? Not both? That would be too good luck! Not both, hey?"

"No, madame, that isn't just true yet. But to-morrow will tell the story. If it hadn't been for a woman in the ward, who *would* give the medicine after I'd forgot it agin and agin, you might have saved the expense of two graves. Something interesting, you know, in burying a baby on its mother's bosom."

"Then she isn't dead?" cried the woman, working the long, sharp nails of her right hand fiercely against the palm. "But the child?"

"Oh! I saw that nicely stowed away among a heap of little coffins, on a wheelbarrow, and ready to be bundled off to the dead-house. All right with the baby!"

"And you're sure there's no mistake?"

"Sure? Didn't I put on its cotton shroud

myself, a mighty scant thing too, but just wide enough to wrap around its little limbs without a fold? I marked the coffin too with *my own* hands, letter B, with chalk. If you want to be satisfied it's easily found, and can be kept till the mother is ready. It'll save expense, besides being so interesting."

"Expense!" cried the occupant of the room, with a look of sharp anxiety. "Expense! I thought the city bore that. Do they charge for putting a miserable baby into Potter's-field?"

"No, but then most people like a single grave, you know; it only costs a dollar."

"Only costs a dollar! as if dollars were made to fling into Potter's-field. Why, woman, do you know how much a dollar is worth? How much interest it will bring, how many years it will take a dollar to double? A dollar for a dead baby! If I'd spent dollars so extravagantly, do you think I should a been rolling in gold now, rolling, rolling in it—do ye hear?"

Jane Kelly cast a rather scornful glance around the miserable chamber, with its naked floor, single bed, and coarse wooden chairs. This did not look much like rolling in gold.

"You don't believe me? you think I lie. Very well, very well. You fear that I cannot pay up, very well again—we shall see to that!"

"It's no joke," said Jane Kelly, who really did begin to fear for the safety of her bribe, after discovering this nakedness of the land. "It's no joke to do what I've done; and a poor body like me might be a trifle anxious about the pay, without blame, let me tell you, ma'am."

"Did you kill the baby?" inquired Madame De Marke, in a low, cunning whisper. "Because if you did, of course that makes a difference. Did you kill it?"

Jane sat silent, tempted to assent; for the woman's words seemed to promise a heavier reward, if crime had really been committed; and her rapacity overcome her prudence.

"Did you kill it?" eagerly repeated the woman.

"Don't ask me?" answered the nurse, drawing down her veil, as with a spasm of remorse, "I don't want to think about it."

"Then you did kill it!" cried the woman, and her little, black eyes twinkled with mingled cupidity and malice.

"The price ought to be doubled, ma'am. One's conscience is worth something."

"Double! oh! ho. Double is it," cried Madame De Marke, rubbing her long, thin hands together with malicious glee. "Why, woman, it's you that should give me money for keeping your wicked secret, Mary Mother forgive me," and madame reached forth her hands, and took a

golden crucifix, with a piece of twine attached, from a ridge over the fire-place, which marked the line where a mantel-piece had been, which she kissed reverently.

The sight of this crucifix, which was of pure gold and exquisitely wrought, gave Jane Kelly renewed confidence in the ability of her employer to reward the service she had rendered. Though a poor match for the shrewd and singular woman with whom she had to deal, Jane was quick-witted enough to see her mistake. But she allowed Madame De Marke to go on, while her own thoughts were taking form.

"You see," whispered madame, fixing her sharp eyes on the nurse, "you see it is dangerous keeping a secret of this kind for any one. Then your coming here to-night, people might suspect me of having some interest in the matter, and that would never do. Still, for a trifle, say two or three months wages, I will keep silent about it."

"Two or three months wages from me to you," cried the nurse astounded, "from me to you!"

"Why, murder! you know, my dear, murder! you don't seem to appreciate the nature of a secret like that."

"But I have committed no murder. The baby died naturally. Who talks of murder? *I only let it alone.* Where is the law again that, I'd like to know."

"You didn't kill it," cried madame, with a grim smile, and still rubbing her hands. "Didn't kill it?"

"Masterly inactivity," as the papers say, nothing more," answered the nurse, gathering self-possession as she remarked the rather crest-fallen looks of her companion.

"Well, then, if the creature died naturally, what more can be said about it? Of course you don't want money for a baby that died of its own accord."

"But I do want money, all you promised, and will have it, too."

"All I promised! how much was that?"

"Two hundred dollars for the baby; four, if both went together," answered Jane, resolutely.

"Two hundred dollars!" cried madame, lifting up both hands, with the long, claw-like nails, like a bird ready to pounce on his prey. "Two hundred dollars! Is the woman crazy? Why it was *two dollars*; a handsome little fee to the nurse, for kindness and care of a poor girl that once washed for me. Two hundred dollars!"

"The poor, young mother isn't dead; and good nursing may save her. I am a good nurse, when I fancy the patient, Madame De Marke."

Madame De Marke started, her eyes fell and were lifted again with a sidelong glance. Jane read the glance, and her own eyes filled with the low cunning always uppermost in her nature.

"I have two ways of nursing. That 'masterly inactivity,' which worked so well for the baby—regular attention to the doctor's directions when he happens to be an experimentalizing student, or inattention to his orders when he is honest and knows what he is about. Any one of 'em is pretty sure to create a demand for two breadths of cotton muslin and a pine coffin."

"And which of these will you take?" asked madame, anxiously.

"None of them, madame. You don't chose to settle up, and I don't chose to work for nothing. Can't afford it; nurses' pay is next to nothing; it's only two months since they gave me wages."

"Why, I thought you had been in Bellevue for years?"

"Oh! yes, off and on I have. But then I was detailed over from the penitentiary, and the prisoners don't get wages. Not much chance for them to make money, except once in a while, when somebody outside wants a thing hushed up, like this, for instance, or a patient happens to hide a few dollars under her pillow, which gives a few lean pickings and stealings to the nurses."

Madame De Marke's eyes brightened, and a crafty smile stole over her lips. "Perhaps she'll have some money hid away. I shouldn't wonder; enough to pay for your trouble all round; she always was hoarding up. Oh, I have no doubt you may trust to finding heaps of money between her beds, but she'll take care of it while there is a breath of life in her, never fear that."

The nurse laughed a low, sly laugh, that rather discomposed her hostess.

"I've searched," she said, "the poor thing lay insensible two whole hours."

"Then you found nothing?" inquired the French woman, with a look of keen anxiety.

"Nothing but a little silk bag, with some papers in it."

"Papers! What were they? I have missed papers. What were they? Or perhaps you can't read. Let me look at the papers."

"Oh! yes," answered the nurse, demurely, "I can read. There was a paper with some poetry on it."

"Poetry," cried Madame De Marke, in a tone of ineffable contempt, but which gave forth a burst of relief also. "Poetry! is that all?"

"No," replied Jane Kelly, with quiet deliberation. "There was some marriage lines between George De Marke and Catharine Long."

Though her face was repulsive and dull from want of washing, Madame De Marke turned pale, and her eyes began to gleam with fierce desire. She stretched forth her hand, and commenced eagerly working the fingers, as a hungry parrot gropes for his food.

"Give me the lines. They belong to me. My name was Catharine, and De Marke's name was George. Give me the lines. She stole them."

"Haven't got them with me," said Jane, folding the cloak more closely around her, with real fear that the witch-like woman would tear them from her bosom, if she knew that they were there.

"But you will bring them. Say to-morrow night."

Jane Kelly laughed, and looking into the eyes of the eager woman, muttered, "Nothing for nothing."

"I—I will give you the—that is a hundred dollars for the paper," urged the woman, still working her fingers eagerly.

"To-night? Well, yes, if you give up the paper, but then for cash down there'll be a discount. Say fifty dollars. Times are very hard."

"Not a cent less than the full hundred," answered the nurse, resolutely.

Madame De Marke sat restlessly in her chair. The idea of parting with so much money was absolute torture. A hundred dollars! Why she did not spend more than half that sum on herself during a whole year, and for that insolent graduate from the penitentiary to ask so much for a single scrap of paper, the very thought enraged her.

"Say seventy-five now," she pleaded, in a wheedling tone, weaving her fingers softly together.

"I don't want to sell the paper. If the girl gets well, as I mean she shall, it'll be worth more than a hundred dollars to her."

"But she has no money."

"Well, I can afford to do without it. The city government always gives me a home when I want it."

"Take seventy-five."

"Well, say seventy-five for the paper, and a hundred for the baby."

"The baby again!" snarled Madame De Marke, "it's dead, of its own accord. I won't pay a sou for it, not a sou!"

Jane Kelly hesitated a moment, looked around the room as if afraid of being overheard, and then leaning forward, whispered a few words in Madame De Marke's ear.

"I—I'll give you the money. Seventy-five

dollars down. One hundred when, when it's all set right."

"It's all set right now."

"Very well, very well, you are a noble girl, Jane. Jane, what is the name?"

"Kelly. Jane Kelly. That isn't my penitentiary name. I've got another for the prison books."

"Never mind the penitentiary, you're a noble girl, Jane Kelly. I'd trust you with untold gold. No, not gold, there is something very tempting in gold, too tempting for human nature; but I'd trust you with silver untold, silver or bank notes, if I only had them about me. But the times are so very hard, say fifty dollars down, all in solid silver, it'll make your heart jump to hear the dollars fall upon each other. I tell you it's enough to break one's heart when such music goes the other way. Now you will take the fifty, that's a dear, good soul."

Jane shook her head stubbornly.

"Now consider how much money is worth just now, fifty dollars is worth a hundred at any other time."

Jane Kelly arose and prepared to go. Bad as she was, this woman's clinging avarice disgusted her.

"Well, well, if you will be so hard-hearted, I must try and raise the money, though how it is to be done I can't begin to tell. Wait a minute. Just step out into the passage, that's a nice girl."

CHAPTER III.

JANE stepped into the passage, and Madame De Marke closed the door after her. In the upper portion of the door was a narrow sash window, covered inside with a faded, red valance, through which the light came with a dull, lurid glow; for Madame De Marke had kindled the end of a tallow candle after the entrance of her visitor, and thus the meagre room was in some sort illuminated.

Jane naturally kept her eyes on this curtain, for all without was profoundly dark. All at once she discovered a corner of the faded maroon folded back, leaving a small, triangular corner of the glass uncovered. To this corner the nurse bent her eye, and saw Madame De Marke half way under the bed, where she looked more like a bundle of old clothes crowded away from sight than a human being.

By her side, upon the soiled floor, stood an ink-bottle with its neck choked up by the swelling stump of her candle. For a moment, the body of Madame De Marke almost disappeared under the bed, then she crept slowly forth backward,

upon her hands and knees, dragging what had once been a small soap box after her.

When once free from the bed, Madame De Marke arose softly to her feet, crept toward the door, and tried the lock to be certain that it was secure. Then she gave the curtain a pull, which, fortunately for Jane, rather increased the scope of vision, that, for the moment, she was admonished not to enjoy.

After satisfying herself that all was right, Madame De Marke seated herself on the floor, and drawing the ink-bottle close to her side, unlocked one of the iron bands that had been fastened around the box, and cautiously lifted the lid, raising the light in her left hand as she proceeded. Again she looked cautiously over her shoulder, holding her breath and half closing the lid. But perfect silence gave her confidence, and with a slow movement, as if each motion were a pang, she began to count out some gold pieces, which she laid in her lap with great caution, lest the gold should clink, and thus reach the ears which she knew must be listening outside the door.

All at once she stopped, held a half eagle between her fingers, where it began to quiver and gleam from the unsteady motion of her hand, while a look of indescribable craft stole over her face. With both her eager hands, she huddled the gold back into its repository, and in its place drew forth a tattered morocco casket that once had been purple, but had now a most shabby appearance, till she unclosed the lid and revealed a treasure that made Jane Kelly's heart leap in her bosom.

The concentrated light of the candle fell within the casket, and she knew by the rainbow gleams and sparkles flashing out, that jewels of price were almost within her grasp.

Now Jane had a great passion for trinkets of all kinds, and it is doubtful if the whole of the bribe for which she waited, would not have taken the form of some paltry ornament within twenty-four hours, had it been paid down in gold. As it was, she pressed her eye close to the glass, and peered gloatingly down upon the burning stones, fully conscious of their brightness, and with a dozing sense of their value.

Directly Madame De Marke closed the casket, and thrust it into the depths of a soiled pocket, that hung between her ragged calico dress and a repulsive under-shirt made from the fragments of an old patch-work bed-quilt. Then she clasped the iron bars over her box, and going down upon her hands and knees again, thrust it away out of sight, reappearing feet foremost, while her face, as it looked out from under her arm, had

the aspect of a laughing Hyena, so visible were the workings of her low craft upon it.

"Now what is she about? what is it makes her smile so?" thought Jane Kelly, recoiling from the window-pane with a shudder, for as the woman arose her sharp eyes were turned that way. "Is she a witch? Does she know that I am peeping? Is that gold? Is the casket——"

She broke off suddenly, and shrunk backward into the darkest corner of the passage, cowering down as if she had been seated on the floor and was but just aroused.

Madame De Marke opened the door, and her little, sharp face peered out.

"Come, come—hish, have ye gone?" she whispered.

"No, I am here, the darkness makes me drowsy, that's all!" answered Jane, coming forward, "especially after watching so many nights without a wink of sleep."

"Step in, quick—why there's heat enough gone through the door already to warm a barn. Heat costs money, don't you know that? It's enough to ruin one to have company in this way, wasting everything."

Jane entered the room.

"You haven't thought better of it? You are resolute to strip me of more money than I can save in a year? You won't relent, ha?"

"I want the money, ma'am, nothing more. It's my just right. I've earned it, if anybody on earth ever did."

"And you won't take anything but money, not money's worth, now?" cried madame, peering eagerly into the face of her visitor.

"Why? Haven't you got the change handy?" asked Jane, with her thoughts fixed longingly on the jewels she had seen.

"The change! She calls seventy-five dollars change. As if a lone woman, like me, ever had so much money by her at once."

Jane thought of the gold she had seen, but still her wishes turned to the diamonds in preference, and she said quickly,

"Well, money or money's worth. I don't much care which, so long as it's the genuine article."

"Well," said the old woman, drawing the casket slowly from her pocket, and opening it. "Here's something now worth five times the money, and just the thing for you, with your plump neck and rosy cheeks. What say? Will ye have 'em instead of the money, especially as the money can't be had just yet?"

"Let me look at them?" cried Jane, eagerly seizing upon the case. "How they do flash! Ear-rings, breast-pin. Oh! but they burn like fire. What are they?"

"Diamonds, every one worth heaps of money," answered madame—"took 'em as security for a debt, you know."

"And will you really let me have em?" asked Jane, almost gasping for breath.

"Well, now you can't expect 'em all, till there's been more work done. Diamonds ain't picked up from the gutters, I can tell you."

"But how many? The ear-rings now. May I have them?"

She lifted up a long, old-fashioned ear-ring, as she spoke, glittering with innumerable pendants, that made her eyes glisten as she held it up to the light. "These now."

"Not all at once," answered madame, softly, and purring about her victim like a cat. "Say one ear-ring and the breast-pin for the papers, and the other ring when that girl is—is asleep, you know."

Jane shook her head, and grasped the ear-rings closer in her hand, gazing upon them with glistening eyes.

"No, no, I'd rather leave the breast-pin, and take both ear-rings."

Madame took the casket from her visitor's hand, and half-closed it.

"If I give both rings for the papers, there is no depending on the rest. No, no, take one, and come back for the mate when the whole job is finished."

"But what good will one ring do me?" cried Jane, almost with tears in her eyes. "I can't wear it!"

"But you will soon be after the mate," answered madame, holding up the ring in her claw-like fingers, and making the pendants tinkle before the longing eyes of her guest. "In three days they will both be yours."

"Yes! but what if it can't be done? Some people never will die without a tussle for it. What good will this be to me then?"

"You can sell it for three hundred dollars, or pawn it."

"Three hundred dollars!" cried Jane, incredulously.

"More than that," answered madame. "You thought I wouldn't be liberal; you higgled about the price. There is three times the sum in your hand, and without asking, too."

The low, wheedling tone in which this was spoken would have created suspicion in a person less eager in her greed. But Jane clutched the prize in her hand, though she still cast longing glances at the casket.

"When shall I see you again, with news? Remember, don't come till you want a mate to that."

"To-morrow night; I'll come to-morrow night, see if I don't."

"Be careful of the ear-ring, dear. Keep it about you. That Bellevue is such a place for thieves. Now the papers."

Jane took the little silken bag from her bosom, and gave it to the eager hands that were extended for it.

"That will do. Now, good night, dear. Come again. Good night. If you should meet a policeman, just turn your face toward him, and he'll know it's all right. You've got a beautiful face, Jane Kelly, a beautiful face. No policeman that sees it will disturb you."

Jane was now in haste to depart, and made her way out of the building in safety, though Madame De Marke only followed her to the nearest flight of stairs, with her candle and ink-bottle, leaving her to find the rest of her way out in darkness.

Jane certainly did meet a policeman not many paces from Madame De Marke's door, and mindful of the council she had received, her face was turned boldly toward him. He gave it a searching look, and walked on.

Madame returned to her room, set her light on the bottom of a chair, and opening the little silken bag, examined its contents. Then, with a chuckle of intense delight, she drew forth her treasure-box again, put the papers, and what remained of the jewels into it, and blew out the candle, while rubbing her hands with low, gleeful chuckles, that broke upon the stillness, at intervals, for half an hour. The woman had evidently accomplished some great point in her transactions with Jane Kelly that night.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

NOTICE.—In order to protect "*The Bound Girl*," commenced in this Magazine, from the system of retaliative piracy now prevailing in England against American authors, the manuscript of each chapter has been placed in the hands of an English gentleman, who will act as its English editor, and who has made such additions as will secure to him a legal copy-right under the existing English copy-right law. Each chapter is copy-righted and published by the editor in Canada as it appears here, and every line published in Peterson's Magazine is taken from *his amended copy*. Thus it will be impossible to republish it in England without infringing on his copy-right as the English editor, or in America without encroaching upon the author's copy-right here.

TWENTY YEARS AFTER MARRIAGE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF ZSCHOKKE.

COUNT STAMMERN and his wife were esteemed a most amiable and enviable pair. Their union was the result of a tender affection, which had imperceptibly grown out of an intercourse of years. They had loved with romantic passion. Each was formed for the other, both were handsome, good, warm-hearted; they harmonized in all their views and wishes.

The scenes which passed between them are still remembered, when after having already been betrothed, their parents quarreled, and the match was broken off. The countess became dangerously ill from grief, and the passionate lover threatened to end his life like Goethe's Werther or Miller's Siegfried. Well, to save the life of the young countess, and to prevent the count from taking such a desperate step, their parents, willingly, or unwillingly, were obliged to become reconciled, at least in appearance. The reconciliation saved the lives of the pair; but as soon as the countess was out of danger, her parents renewed the strife, and sought to defer the marriage for a few years. Upon this, the lovers got up one night, rode over the borders, were united at the altar, returned as man and wife, and with this, earth seemed transformed into Paradise.

Their marriage was viewed by all the world as a most happy one, and their life everywhere held up as a pattern of harmony and peace. From morning to evening, the young people seemed to think of nothing but how to please one another. In the first year they even wrote poems upon each other, the most tender and moving in the world; in winter as well as in summer, they filled each other's room with significant flowers; every piece of household furniture was endeared to them by some affectionate remembrance. In the second year, indeed, these flights of sentimentality, which bordered upon affectation, somewhat subsided, but still in all circles, societies, balls and diversions of whatever sort, they beheld only each other, sought only each other, and lived only for each other. In the third year, they laid aside this amiable impoliteness in public, but at home they remained the same. Not until the fourth year did they seem so far to recover from their first delirium of love, that they could visit separately, and he in one place, and she in another, could spend an evening, and at times a

day, in society, without home sickness. So much the more delightful was the pleasure of meeting again. In the fifth year, the count could travel for weeks, without a heart torn with grief, or without her swooning at his departure. But the letters thou shouldst read that they then wrote to each other! Truly, Heloise, with the pen of Pope, wrote not more tenderly and glowingly. In the sixth year, they were at last so reasonable, that one or two friendly letters sufficed for an absence of weeks. In the seventh, both felt that they could love just as ardently without it being necessary for them by word and writing to repeat the assurance from morning till evening. This was already a good deal. Their happiness had now reached the highest point, because they had at last found for each other the silent confidence of tender friendship. In the eighth, they stripped their love of so much of its egotism, that they felt some regard for the rest of the world, and lived no longer solely for one another, as if they alone were the living actors, and the rest of mankind dead figures upon the scene. In the ninth, they were the most amiable, benevolent, agreeable, obliging persons abroad as well as at home. In the tenth, they were like the rest of us, children of men as we are, and as good people commonly are who have been married ten years.

In the first year of the second ten, they both remarked in each other, that their tenderness was no longer so violent and stormy. They found that very natural. One can love without being impetuous. In the following year, they discovered various little foibles in each other, which hitherto had been covered by the mantle of affection. Well, they were forbearing, and each endured the faults of the other with kind indulgence. In the third, a gentle rebuke passed now and then; but they were still considerate, and if it so happened that the feelings of either were wounded by harshness or contradiction, it was certain that the offender would make the sweetest reparation. But in the fourth year, each one believed that this making reparation came too often to his or her turn. Each accused the other of being disposed to pardon everything in himself, in the other nothing. In the fifth, they would often vex and tease each other, and without being conscious of it. In the sixth, they

began to weigh their words carefully, in order to preserve good harmony. In the seventh, misunderstandings often occurred, and nothing was more common than for one to feel sensitive at some expression of the other's. They interpreted this, however, as a proof of affection and tenderness; the wounds of a hostile sword smart not like the unkind looks of one we love. In the eighth, frequent wranglings occurred, but they were followed by no consequences. In the best marriage such things take place. They were angry with each other for a few days, and then became reconciled. In the ninth year, their mutual irritability brought them to the wise resolution of avoiding too frequent interviews. "Thou art sensitive and excitable," said the count, "and I am sometimes so also. That will never do. Thou might'st become violent, and I might become so likewise. The best way is, that I should leave thee thy will in everything, and do thou leave me mine. Let us live cheerfully together, without continually tormenting each other. We love, but we must not plague ourselves to death with our love." The countess thought so likewise. From this time, their domestic arrangements were on a separate footing. They saw each other seldom, except at table. Neither asked whence do you come, or whither do you go? They found quiet days again, and lived politely together in peace and harmony. If either was vexed at the words or actions of the other, they parted with a compliment, and the most friendly aspect in the world.

One evening, in the tenth year—thou hast here the history of twenty years—both came from a concert, supped together, and then drew toward the fire to chat away an hour. Both were still filled with the emotions which the sweet and impressive music they had heard had excited in their tender hearts.

"Alas!" said the countess, "all were well, if one could only continue young."

"Thou needst not complain. Where is the woman whose youth is so well preserved as thine? I see no difference in thee to-day, and on the evening of thy wedding. Some humors, perhaps! But one must bear with these. Our union is one of the most enviable upon the earth. Were I unmarried, and should see thee, I would offer my hand to none other."

"Very prettily said," replied the countess, with a sigh. "But, only think, my dear, twenty years already! What am I now? What was I then?"

"Now a charming woman, then a charming maiden. I would not exchange the one for the other." He arose, and kissing her, pressed her to his bosom.

"We have been happy, very happy. Only one thing is wanting, only one, which crowns the happiness of other marriages."

"I understand thee; a child that would inherit thy grace and virtue."

"Oh, how happy this would make us! Yet one child gives as much sorrow and anxiety as pleasure. The least accident might rob us of it. But—yes, two children——"

"Thou art right. And not two, but three. For with two—if one should die, we are in the same anxiety as before. I am certain heaven will hear our prayer. Three children will yet sport about us."

"My dear," she said, smiling, "that were almost too much. That would bring us into new perplexity. For example, if they were sons?"

"Well, we have five and twenty thousand crowns income. Enough for us and for them. The oldest I would place in the army; the second should enter upon a diplomatic career. Both will be a great expense to us, it is true, but they will rise. We have connections, rank, and interest."

"But, my dear, you have forgotten the youngest."

"The youngest? Not at all. He shall enter the church. He shall be a prebendary. The benefice will not be wanting."

"What? A prebendary! My son a priest! No, indeed, that will never do."

"Never do! And why not, if I may ask? He may become an Abbot, Bishop, Cardinal."

"Never, never, never! I will never be the mother of a monk, and see my son in a cowl, and with a smooth-shaven pate. Fie! what an idea to enter thy head. If I had a hundred sons, I would not consent to it."

"Thou art in a very strange temper to-day, dear wife. What is for his happiness and ours, thou wilt certainly consent to, with all thy ill-humor against the clergy."

"Never! I declare it—I firmly declare it. Call it humor, if you please. I know this, that it is often thy humor to be lord and master. But forget not, that even a mother may be in the right."

"Not at all. The judgment is found in the father."

"But if this does not always suffice?"

"If mine does not suffice, my lady countess, I certainly would *at last* apply for yours. I will answer for it, when the case occurs, I shall know how to make my wishes respected."

"Oh, yes, I know well enough you are my husband and master, but I have not the honor to be your slave."

"Nor I your puppet, lady countess. I have always shown you indulgence in everything—perhaps too much. But as mildly as I endure caprices, pardon me, but there are some fancies which are too silly."

"I am greatly obliged to you for the information, of which you have just given me a rude and practical proof. Which of us, let me ask, has been the most indulgent? For years long I have borne your improprieties in silence; I have generously pardoned them, viewing them more as faults of the understanding and of education, than of the heart. But the most angelic patience wears at last."

"There you are perfectly right. Mine has long since been severely tried by your whims and singularities, and you may congratulate yourself that I have not thrown off the yoke before this. For, in truth, it is not the most delightful thing to be the humble servant of your follies. I must for once speak plainly."

"If I had spoken plainly with you, you would long since have known that you are a proud and concealed egotist, with whom it is hard enough to be on good terms; a form without a heart, continually speaking of the feelings, because one always makes the greatest parade of that of which one is destitute."

"Indeed? For this reason you are so ready to boast of your judgment, your delicacy. You may deceive others, but as for me, I have been

long undeceived. Virtue with you is, after all mere woman's grimace. You are, with your fine airs, so much the more disagreeable to me, the more I know of your heart. Except for pity, I had long since sent you to your family for the sake of peace."

"You anticipate me in my wishes. A precise, tedious egotist, is not the character to please a sensible woman. And after such a declaration, you can easily understand, that I have no greater pleasure to expect than to be soon freed from you."

"Most excellent! The mask is at last thrown off. I take you at your word, and ask for nothing better. Adieu! Pleasant dreams! To-morrow the whole affair shall be arranged."

"The earlier the better, sir count."

They then parted. The next day the notary was summoned; witnesses came; the act of divorce was drawn up and mutually signed, notwithstanding the entreaties and warnings of friends, of relatives, and even of persons of the highest distinction. The separation followed.

Thus was a long and apparently happy union suddenly severed. A ridiculous quarrel about the future lot of three sons, who were not yet in the world, rent the tie which they had supposed a bond for eternity. And, in truth, the count as well as the countess are most amiable people. There is nothing wrong about them except weaknesses, which we all have.

HELEN'S HERO.

BY ELLA RODMAN.

ALL the flowers in the village of Delville were born to blush unseen—it being one of those uneventful places where the womenkind are nuns without taking the veil. Nothing ever came there; even travelling exhibitions turned off on some other route: and sight-seeing was an unknown pleasure. It never seemed to be on the direct road from any place; and, when, by some chance, travellers found themselves lodged there, they felt like people to whom such a cosy, little nest belonged by right of discovery.

And yet the satisfaction of the Delvillians was almost equal to that of the Khan of Tartary, who, after dining himself, orders a courier to announce to the other potentates of the earth that they are welcome to enjoy the like privilege. They had plenty of trees, and plenty of ground; and, for public buildings, they had churches, and schools, and a Surrogate's office—what more could heart desire? So they went on in their slow way, just the same as it was years ago; and entertained a thorough Chinese horror of all invaders and importations.

Helen Glowood stood, one bright morning, in the parlor of the pleasantest house in Delville, with a most flimsy pretext of dusting the furniture. But the duster had fallen from her hands some time since; and the young lady's pretty eyes (she *had* pretty ones) were travelling up and down the village street with not much better success than those of sister Anne, "in Blue Beard," who sometimes saw "a cloud of dust," and sometimes "a flock of sheep."

To do the people of Delville justice, they sometimes *had* processions—of *cattle*; and Helen, one day, in despair, counted two hundred and six oxen on their way to a neighboring market. An alarming propensity of the Delvillians was to turn everything into ready money; and they would, probably, have gone about in the condition of good old uncle Ned, who is represented as lacking a covering on "the place where the wool ought to grow," and they have been assured that the hair which as yet remained undisturbed might have been spun or wrought into anything valuable.

Oh! Delville! In the palace of Truth would be torn from thee the false inscription "fancy portrait," and written underneath, "*painted from*"

Helen had been a long time looking at nothing; but, during this period, she had fallen into a sort of waking dream upon the barrenness of Delville in general, and the remarkably uneventful pilgrimage which she seemed destined to perform. As this last thought crossed her mind, she gave a half glance toward her father's office over the way, and blushed a little at some recollection, which it may be as well to explain.

Mr. Glowood was county judge and surrogate, and presided with grave dignity in the small, red brick building that was considered one of the village ornaments. He was a quiet, serious man, with more learning than he usually displayed; and seemed quite satisfied with his evident destiny, which had already been two-thirds accomplished, that of being born, married, and buried in Delville.

He had but one child, and she was motherless. Helen Glowood was a very pretty girl, who, in a more appreciating circle, would have filled a higher destiny; but the people of Delville needed to be shown the difference between tube-roses and sunflowers before acknowledging any superior claims. Nearly all the men in Delville were claimed by some particular female, and returned the salutations of pretty Helen Glowood as composedly as they did those of her aunt, Miss Becky; and were, with one exception, entirely insensible to any difference between the two.

This one exception was her father's clerk. Nature in making him had not forgotten the eyes, and Walter Camberson appeared to think that these useful organs had been given him for the express purpose of looking at Helen Glowood. The wisacres of Delville had, long ago, pronounced him "a likely young man;" "they could see that there was something in him the very first day that he entered the village;" Mr. Glowood had often been indebted to his assistance in troublesome dilemmas, and entertained a high opinion of his clerk's talents—although he often frowned at Walter's inclination to employ these talents on the least eligible side; and Helen—well, she *said* less than any one, but she *was*, that very morning, wondering how it had come about that she should think so much of Walter.

He had never told his love; but Helen *was* perfectly well aware of his sentiments respecting her, and the gentleman appeared quite satisfied

with hers in return. She believed that she *did* remember some nonsense about stopping at her father's office, one day, to write a letter; and Walter, who happened to be alone on the premises, made her a pen; and, when he requested the pleasure of carrying the letter to the post-office, his look seemed to say, "To be employed in *your* service gilds the most trifling performance." And then he began to visit the house quite frequently; and Helen heard him speak very sweetly to a poor old woman, and read in the "Delville Banner", a glowing speech of his in behalf of an oppressed family; and, somehow or other—she began to think, *now*, that it was because he was the only one she saw—she learned to look for his coming, and to expect him to wear a far different smile for *her* from what he bestowed upon others; but, now, that she thought it over, she wondered if this was not all very tame!

In the midst of her reflection, a most unusual sound for Delville, that of gay, triumphant music, was borne upon the air; and she heard the rolling of drums and the tramp of many feet, mingled with the notes of "Hail, the Conquering Hero Comes."

Helen looked from the window, and distinguished the worthies of Delville, arrayed in regiments, long since outgrown, with swords rusty from long inaction, walking two and two together, and evidently impressed with the idea that they were making a most imposing appearance. But this all meant something; these modern Cincinnatiates had not left the plough, the anvil, and the shears for nothing; and Helen at last remembered that this must be in honor of the arrival of General —, the valiant hero who had just come fresh from victory.

His terrible encounter with the cannibals of the Opoco Islands had lately been recorded in the Delville Banner—his many hair-breadth escapes, interesting scars, and undaunted courage had been done full justice to; and the inhabitants were fully informed that the hero would probably stop at the Delville Hotel, for a day or two, on his way somewhere else.

The Opoco Islands have not yet been discovered; but as Micawber observed to David Copperfield, that "he had no doubt they *would* have roamed about the braes, and pulled the gowans fine had the thing been at all feasible," it may as well be supposed that the general would, doubtless, have vanquished the Opoco Islands had they been anywhere to attack.

Helen had never seen a great man in her life—not even a President; and she thought it a shame that the highest officer in authority did not make

kingly progress through the Union, or exhibit himself at so much a head, that all might have an opportunity of beholding him. How she wished that Walter Camberson had been seized with a fancy for wielding a sword instead of a quill—there was something so elevating in the enthusiasm inspired by a pair of epaulettes!

As Helen looked upon this spirited procession, she remembered her penchant for a grey-haired hero, with at least *one* arm in a sling, and some prominent scar to tell of "the dangers he had passed;" she recollected that Walter Camberson was not at all what she had so often pictured as a being worthy of enthusiastic love—and, drawing a fancy portrait of General —, she quite made up her mind that she was about to meet her destiny.

On *one* thing she was determined. Her father *should* call upon the general—she would give him no rest until he did. Was he not one of the very first men in the place? And yet he always shrank from putting himself forward, declaring that it was too much trouble. But it was his *duty*, as it was that of all men, to acknowledge the general's claims upon his country; and go he should.

Helen had, now, something to think of—there was, now, an event to vary the quiet current of her existence; and, buried in profound contemplation of the general's perfections, as she had arranged them in her own mind, she walked slowly up to her aunt's apartment.

Miss Becky, however, was not enthusiastic—she had no opinion of great people; they gave, she said, a world of trouble; and she told Helen, rather shortly, that "if *she* expected to have that dinner on her shoulders, she would not be quite so ready to give the invitation." For Helen had gently insinuated the propriety of inviting the general to dine; but the proposal was received by Miss Becky with the most unqualified contempt.

Judge Glowood came duly home to dinner; and it must be confessed that one of Helen's very first inquiries respecting the general was whether he was private property, or an unappropriated individual. Her father had not heard many particulars concerning him, but he rather thought the general was unmarried; and then he proceeded to carve as composedly as usual.

"How soon shall you call upon him, papa?" continued Helen, "and do, pray, invite him to dinner."

Very much surprised at his daughter's enthusiasm for a person whom she had never seen, Mr. Glowood asked, with a smile,

"And what makes you so hospitably inclined toward General —?"

"Because," replied Helen, somewhat confusedly, "he is so noble, and valiant, and everybody is talking of him, papa. You know," she continued, "that we have very few opportunities of seeing great men—and I should be so proud to entertain General —."

"Well, well," replied her father, as he commenced in earnest the process of dining, "we shall see about it."

This Helen considered almost equivalent to a promise; and spent the afternoon in a perfect flutter of excitement. She sat poring over the history of Gustavus Vasa; and, while reading the romantic account of his second marriage, she fancied herself in the place of the lovely Margaret Ericson, who wept at the thoughts of a marriage with the handsome crown-prince, because her heart was given to his noble, grey-haired father. General — was, of course, a prototype of the great Gustavus; and Walter Camberson quite as truthfully personated the crown-prince. So that she had certainly an illustrious antecedent in forsaking a young lover for an old one.

Had all these thoughts been laid open to the perusal of those around her, Helen would have been laughed out of her dream at its very commencement; but she wisely kept her imaginings to herself and pursued her usual round of employments—although the noble features of a veteran hero were constantly coming between her and every other thought.

Helen did not look forward to Walter's evening visit with the usual pleasure.

"Have you seen him?" she exclaimed, almost as soon as the gentleman entered.

"Seen who?" he inquired, with most provoking coolness.

"Why, General —," replied Helen, impatiently, "his name must be in every one's mouth."

"Oh, yes," observed Walter, slowly, "I do remember me, as James would say, of seeing several cavaliers, who looked very much out of their element, marching up and down the street, to-day—and, when I asked why they were not at work, as usual, I received for answer that this performance was in honor of the arrival of General —. Also, in passing the hotel, I saw a stout man preparing to fortify himself with a particularly strong glass of brandy and water—probably the same individual."

"Nonsense!" replied Helen, while an angry flush, called forth by Walter's remarks, tinged her cheek with a deeper hue, "I do not believe that Gen. — would do such a thing! What sort of looking man is he?" she continued, carelessly.

"Short and red-faced, with lobster eyes, and a very flourishing crop of sandy hair—his head wearing the appearance of being thatched with soiled straw."

Talk of women running down each other's good looks! Just hear one man describe another, if there is the least *soupc*on of rivalry between them!

Helen was perfectly indignant.

"I do not believe," said she, "that you have seen him, at all!"

Walter made no reply; and there was a pause, for some time.

"Come, Helen," said he, at length, as though the subject had been forgotten, "I want the soothing influence of sweet sounds," and opening the piano as he spoke, he led Helen toward it.

She seated herself at the instrument; and soon stunned Walter's ears with a martial performance, which, as a somewhat unlettered critic observed, "beat the Battle of Prague all hollow." For every cannon discharged in that pride of school girls, at least *two* went off here; and drums beat as though the imaginary army had more than they knew what to do with.

Then she performed various marches; and Walter listened and admired, apparently in earnest—though, all the time, he was longing for some of those gentle songs that were so peculiarly suited to Helen's voice, and wondered very much what had wrought this sudden change in his lady-love.

Helen turned round on her music-stool, and affected intense admiration of a handsome soldier, on the cover of a piece of music, who was singing a most inconsistent and preposterous farewell to an imaginary piece of perfection.

"All men should be soldiers," she observed, for Walter's benefit, "a quiet life, for a man, seems so effeminate."

She did not quite like Walter's air of amusement, as he replied, "Surely, you would not have brother always meeting brother with doubled fist? Beside," he added, "that is quite an aspersion upon my employment; but sword and bayonet have not done more for their country than the grey, goose-quill."

"Yes," replied Helen, saucily, "and the cackling of a goose saved imperial Rome. A mouse, too, once set a lion free."

But Walter only laughed; and he looked so much amused that she began a panegyric upon the unseen general.

Having endowed him with all possible and impossible virtues, she paused to take breath; but Walter listened to these raptures in perfect silence; when, just as matters seemed approaching

an awkward crisis, Judge Glowood entered, looking completely wearied out.

He had been hunting the lion unsuccessfully, for a long time; but, at length, he succeeded in finding him, and the invitation was given and accepted. The general was very much occupied, and his stay would be but short; still, as a great favor, he would endeavor to come.

Helen flew to her aunt with the delightful news; but Miss Becky was anything but pleased at the prospect of so troublesome an invasion. She seemed to think that the general's slaughtering propensities were not confined to animate things, and feared that she could not furnish a table sufficiently to satisfy him, and concluded by wondering if her brother had gone crazy.

Whatever might have been Mr. Glowood's impressions of the expected guest, he kept them to himself; and Helen was left in uncertainty.

However, as the time approached, she arrayed herself very charmingly in a blue muslin dress; and blushed and trembled very much, as she sat there in the parlor—hoping for, and yet half dreading to hear, the general's ring. Would he enter the room like Napoleon, erect, grave, with one hand behind him—or would a smile of peculiar sweetness illuminate his features as his eye fell upon her? She wondered if she would be able to raise her eyes to the glittering figure, and what his first words would be.

These bewildering reflections were rudely interrupted by Miss Becky, who came in to say that dinner was ready—the hour named had passed by without bringing the guest—and the meal would certainly be spoiled. The general ought to be ashamed of himself for not having refused at once, instead of giving her so much trouble; but, having accepted, he should now be ashamed for not coming.

Helen's hopes fell; perhaps, after all, she should not see him!

Judge Glowood and his clerk made their appearance; but still no General —. To Helen's great disappointment, her father insisted upon sitting down to the table, when the clock had pointed to half an hour beyond the time; and it required quite a powerful effort to refrain from shedding tears. Walter thought that she had never looked so charming, but he felt almost as much curiosity to behold the general as Helen, herself; he was, as yet, uncertain whether to fear him or not.

They had quite given up all expectation of the guest, when the judge was informed that a gentleman wished to see him; and, after a few moments' absence, he returned, accompanied by the tardy general.

Helen did not look up until he was seated; then she found herself vis-a-vis to a weather-beaten-looking individual, who was neither tall nor short, fat nor thin—whose expression was neither stern nor benignant, and who appeared particularly unaccustomed to ladies' society.

Helen received a dodge of the head, as his part of the introduction that ensued; and the first words of the great man, particularly addressed to herself, were: "Have some salt, mum?" accompanied by a somerset on the part of the injured salt-cellar.

Helen wished to keep her eyes on her own plate, but a strange propensity impelled her to glance toward Walter. He was just raising a goblet of water to his lips; but she caught a glimpse of laughing eyes that seemed fairly dancing with merriment on the edge of the glass.

The young lawyer had weighed his fancied rival carefully, and found him wanting; his equanimity being, therefore, quite restored, he determined to amuse himself at the expense of his fickle lady-love. He watched the visitor narrowly—not a single movement escaped him; and poor Helen sat with painfully burning cheeks beneath the provoking looks that Walter was constantly sending toward her.

The general's style of eating was decidedly unique. He had been too familiar with more formidable weapons to use much precaution in handling his knife; and as Miss Becky watched the rapid strides which that utensil seemed making for his throat, she grew alarmed lest it should "sink to rise no more."

The visitor had taken the invitation to dine in its most literal sense, and effectually repulsed all attempts to draw him into conversation. At length, he paused from sheer exhaustion, and Mr. Glowood seized the favorable moment to draw him out.

"You have seen some pretty hard service, I believe, sir?" observed the judge.

"Yes, pretty hard," replied the visitor, "pretty hard," and here he plunged into a dish of floating islands as though it had been one of his foes. He said no more until the conclusion of the repast.

"Well, sir," said the general, hastily drawing back his chair, with the air of one who has performed his duty, "I feel obliged to you for your polite invitation, in accepting which I have enjoyed myself most agreeably. And, madam," turning to Helen, "I feel happy to have made your delightful acquaintance, and should be glad to meet you again."

And the man of war went the way of all men who wish to emerge into the street.

The general's visit was over; leaving Miss Becky highly indignant—Helen somewhat hysterical—Judge Glowood extremely puzzled—and Walter very much amused. He set himself assiduously to the task of consoling the disappointed damsel, but she would not be consoled, and received all his attempts with such a decided pout that he abandoned the field in despair.

Helen said to herself, "let him go," and was quite sure that she never *would* have anything more to do with him.

The summer passed, and autumn leaves were fringing the woods with crimson.

The single window wherein Miss Bastings, "the mould of form," to the female Delvillians, delighted to exhibit her first appreciation of the fashions, glowed brightly with gorgeous ribbons; and in the small apartment behind the shop, sacred to the process of cutting and fitting, sat our friend Helen, tapping her parasol on the floor with a somewhat confused air.

"I can see, with half an eye, what *you've* come for!" exclaimed the officiating priestess, who wore such a huge pair of clippers that she seemed to be all shears.

Helen blushed, as she glanced at the neat parcel toward which Miss Bastings' sharp eyes had been directed, and looked as though she did not half like it.

"No use, now, in putting on any airs with *me*," continued the active spinster, "people do not wear white satin dresses to church for nothing—and I'm really glad that you and Walter have come round again, it's quite time—though, to be sure," she continued, with an encouraging nod to herself, in the glass, "people marry at all ages."

Helen did not contradict this, and Miss Bastings clipped away with renewed vigor.

"You've got a clear, little waist," observed the complaisant dressmaker, regarding Helen as a creditable block for the display of her own skill.

"Settle down in the old house, I suppose?" she continued, half-provoked at her customer's silence.

The bride-elect was roused from a pleasant reverie, "I do not know," she replied, in an embarrassed manner, "I believe there was some talk of moving away."

"Not away from *Delville*!" exclaimed the excited spinster, "well, now, that's what *I* call real *mean*—a real mean *shame*. As soon as people get a little up in the world, they go and move off, instead of staying to ornament their native village. It isn't treating Delville well—it ain't *patriotic*. Well," continued Miss Bastings, "there's *one* comfort, at any rate, if

people *are* moving out, there are others ready to come in. Mrs. General — will quite illumine the place."

"Is the general married?" asked Helen, surprised at this very natural circumstance.

"La, yes," replied her informant, "didn't you know *that*? His wife and I used to go to school together, and I've boxed Sally Price's ears many a time; but I suppose that she quite sticks up, *now*."

Helen walked home in a thoughtful mood, as she remembered her romance; but her laughter broke forth unrestrainedly when Walter whispered, with his peculiar manner,

"Helen, I have had an introduction to Mrs. General —; she does not look in the least like *you*."

There was a quiet wedding at Delville; and the two departed to build an altar for their household gods elsewhere.

Walter Camberson rapidly rose to fame and distinction; and when years had cemented the bond that sent them forth together, they went, one day, to a public meeting, where different wonders were exhibited, and different people were expected to make speeches.

Helen's laughing eye was soon attracted by the figure of her old acquaintance, General —, to whose arm clung a small, sharp-looking woman, who seemed resolved to impress the crowd with a conviction of her proprietorship.

There was a stir among the assembled multitude; and the general was, with some difficulty, persuaded to mount the platform.

"He's going to make a *speech*!" whispered Walter, with a most wicked smile.

Expectation was upon tiptoe; but the general's lips remained so long glued together that it seemed doubtful whether he had not an attack of lockjaw.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he commenced, with difficulty, "it gives me much pleasure to see you assembled here to day." Here he smiled as benignly upon the crowd as though he had been welcoming them to his own house.

"Hear! hear!" exclaimed an admirer, but no more appeared to be forthcoming; until at length the speaker gathered courage to add,

"This is a most useful project, and worthy of all encouragement. I am no speaker," he concluded, which was, certainly, a self-evident fact, "and you must excuse me from farther exertion."

A great many smiled as the general again sought shelter beneath the protection of his resolute-looking lady; but one of his friends observed:

"The general ain't a *great* speaker, to be sure; but, when he *does* speak, it's always to the pint."

Helen, however, thought it decidedly Jack Bunsbyish; and found it quite impossible to restrain her laughter.

When she had composed her face to a proper degree of gravity, she looked up to see her husband mounted on the platform. She shook nervously as she reflected that Walter's fort did not consist in making himself conspicuous, but his first words reassured her; and she fairly devoured the glowing sentences that seemed to emanate from a heart inspired by every noble feeling.

There was no attempt at display—but perfect silence reigned throughout the audience; and, after a speech that seemed very brief indeed to

them, Walter found himself overwhelmed with congratulations, and offers of friendship.

He looked at Helen. Her face was more eloquent than their honeyed words, and he hastened to join her.

"Well, Helen," he whispered, "have you recovered yet from your hero-worship?"

"No," she replied softly, "the *worship* is unchanged—but not the idol. I humbly bow to the grey goose-quill; and consider the general better calculated to hew off the heads of his fellow-men than to supply them with any fresh ideas."

Helen never again found herself in the position of those unfortunates whose destiny it is

"To make them idols, and to find them clay."

EMILY WHARTON'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

BY FANNY SMITH.

At eighteen, according to the diploma of a fashionable boarding-school, Emily Martin was fully qualified to marry. Her music was of the most scientific description, far above the comprehension of the common herd; her voice in the highest state of cultivation; her French as Parisian as Monsieur Gondon and a provincial French nursery-maid could make it; her Italian so extensive that she could sing it with but few mistakes, and her embroidery and fancy work very much better than her plain sewing.

So, as I said before, my friend Emily considered herself fully competent for the matrimonial state, and a certain Louis Wharton thought so too.

After the flutter of bridal finery and bridal parties was over, the young wife was carried off to a distant village to make acquaintance with her husband's family, and she came home delighted with everything and everybody she saw. Such housekeeping, such clock-work regularity, such breakfasts, and dinners, and suppers; these were the themes of Emily's conversation for many a day, and she had half a mind to try to rival her mother-in-law and sister-in-law in that respect.

But her old interests and occupations soon superseded her new ones, the more readily, as Biddy, her one servant, was a faithful, thorough-going creature, who preferred having the work entirely under own control.

It was four months after her marriage, and with a gay heart and willing hands, Emily Wharton was putting her frilled pillow-cases on the bed of her spare room, for her mother-in-law was expected that day to make them a visit.

She was standing back to admire the effect of her handy work, when Biddy put her head in at the open door.

"If you please, mam," said she, "I must go this minit to my sither's. Jemmy's down stairs, and he says the baby's most dead intirely. The

Virgin save us!" and Biddy's tears flowed copiously.

Poor Emily stood bewildered. It was a case in which she could not refuse to let her servant go, but what was she to do? her mother-in-law, the queen of housekeepers, coming, and dinner to get. Had it been a piece of intricate music to play at sight, she would have laughed at the difficulty, but chickens to prepare, and dessert to make, and old Mrs. Wharton to criticize! poor Emily felt as if her sorrow was as great as Biddy's.

"But can't you run down and see the child, Biddy, and then come back to get dinner? You know my mother-in-law is coming to-day. You shall go away again as soon as possible. I guess the baby isn't so very sick," said she, as coaxingly as if her manner would have made it as she wished.

But Biddy shook her head.

"If it's ill jest, you see, mam, I must stay and help nurse it; and if it dies, Margary will want me to wake with it. But I'll come back, mam, as soon as iver I can," and she left the room to put on her things.

Emily seated herself on the foot of the bed which she had been at so much trouble to prepare, and looked as if stunned by some unexpected blow.

She could not collect her ideas, and it was not till she heard the hall door close, that she recollected how much she might have learned from Biddy, had she but had her wits about her sufficiently to have asked.

There was a mine of energy in Emily's character which had never been worked for want of necessity, so without stopping to bewail the unfortunate circumstance any longer, she proceeded at once to the kitchen. There upon the large waiter, which Biddy always used for such purposes, lay a pair of fine chickens, with amputated legs, and in the half prepared state in

which they were when she had received the news.

The poor, little housekeeper gazed at them for a moment, no more knowing what to do with them than the Indian did with the syllabub, till a happy thought flashed across her bewildered brain, and, with something like a smile, she got her cook book. But, alas! there were "chicken patties," and "chicken gumbo," and "chicken fricasees," but never a word about *preparing* and roasting chickens. She took the fowls up and studied their anatomy as attentively as ever Cuvier did that of some precious, unknown animal, but it was of no use; dress them she *could not*, and with a sigh, and a hearty inclination to cry, she sat down to reflect upon what was to be done.

She picked up the waiter and carried it to the cellar, and during her explorations in the safe, she discovered a fine roasting piece of beef, which had been sent home with the marketing. She could almost have danced for joy. A nugget of gold gleaming upon the eye of a California adventurer was never half so welcome. Here at least there could be no difficulty; no preparation nor filling was necessary here. She was uncertain, however, how long it should roast, so she again applied to her cook book. But with no better success than before. There was "beef *a-la-mode*," and "beef *bouilli*," "French beef," and "beef olins," but never a word about a plain, old-fashioned roast. Still as there was a chance of getting something for dinner, Emily would not be totally discouraged, so she hunted up a pan, and put the beef in the oven, determined it should be done enough; but knew nothing of the necessity of seasoning.

The potatoes were her next trouble. Were they to be put in hot water or cold? And secretly thinking that washing them was about as dirty work as she ever did, she dropped them into a large boiler of hot water.

The mental debate then was, "Spinach versus cold ham." The former carried the day, but as she looked at the basket full of crisp, dark-green leaves, she wondered if Louis, when he marketed, had intended they should live on spinach for the next week. So she threw a couple of handfuls into a pot of water, and wondered how long it took eggs to boil hard enough to eat with it.

"The dinner will look somewhat frugal, to be sure, but mother Wharton will excuse it under the circumstances, I know," thought Emily, as she gazed at the clock, and found it was just twelve. They dined at two, and the dessert was yet to be made. But what was it to be? She did not know what Biddy had intended doing

with all the milk which she saw in the cellar, but she was so out of patience with her cook book, that she never thought of consulting it again. Here, however, she defied circumstances. She had some fine preserves which her mother had put up for her, and cheese, and almonds, and raisins, and the dessert for this day should consist of these.

With a mind very much relieved, she proceeded to arrange the dinner-table, and after a dozen unnecessary excursions to the pantry, it was completed with the exception of spoons for the vegetables, and the castor.

Emily thought it was now time to see how her dinner was coming on. She opened the door of the range, and to her dismay she found that the splendid piece of beef had a whitish, sickly look, and that the oven was as cold as charity. With tears in her eyes she tried the potatoes. They lay snugly huddled together far down in a gallon of water, as hard as when they were put in. The two handfuls of spinach had diminished frightfully, and as a climax to the disasters, she now, for the first time, noticed that the bright fire in the range had become dusky white ashes, which gave forth no heat.

Her previous anxiety had made her nervous, and now she took a hearty cry. But she soon went to work again right bravely. She applied the poker vigorously to the grate, but nothing except dust and cinders, which nearly choked her, followed. She lifted the lid from the range and looked in. There was still a little fire left, and determining to have a good one when she made it, she threw on a whole scuttle full of coal. She went on raking away, covering herself with fine white ashes, the tears coming occasionally in spite of herself, when the door-bell rang.

With a half terrified "oh, dear, there they are," and another burst of tears, which she hastily wiped away, Emily proceeded to open the front door, never thinking of her appearance.

Louis was handing his mother out of the carriage, and she stood like a culprit, half hidden by the door.

"Here, Biddy, take this basket," said he, handing a small travelling satchel, as he spoke, without looking up.

"Oh, Louis!" was the answer of the supposed Biddy.

The young husband started in astonishment. That this blackened, tear-stained, ashes-covered figure could be his neat, smiling, pretty wife, was almost incomprehensible.

"Biddy's left me, Louis! How d'do, mother," but the kiss on old Mrs. Wharton's face was

accompanied by such a burst of tears as shocked the mother-in-law. The good, thrifty soul, could not comprehend *such* a sorrow.

They all went into the parlor, where Emily, with a broken voice, recounted her troubles.

It would be untrue to say that Louis was not disappointed; he was so anxious that Emily should continue the favorable impression which he knew that she had at first made on his mother. In his own mind he had determined that she should sing herself like a mermaid into old Mrs. Wharton's affections, and he just now discovered that there were other accomplishments, which he suspected his mother valued more highly than music, singing, French or Italian.

The good lady smiled, but not unkindly, on her daughter-in-law, for she saw how anxious she was to do her duty.

"No matter, Emily, about your dinner," said she. "If your kettle boils, give us some bread and butter and preserves, and a cup of tea, and we shall do famously. Wait till I get off my things, and I will see what I can do with your refractory fire. I can generally coax up one like a charm."

The willing voice and manner relieved Emily

indescribably, and with a lightened heart she led the way to the kitchen.

Mrs. Wharton rolled up her sleeves, tied her handkerchief over her cap, and pinned up her gown, (Emily did not possess a cooking apron, for which she inquired) then with an ease which did really seem like a charm, she kindled a fire with the splints which Emily had brought at her request from the cellar.

A suspicious twitch flitted about the corners of her mouth, as she peered over her spectacles at the beef, the potatoes, and the spinach, but she told Emily so kindly how she ought to have done, and made it all appear so easy, that the poor, little wife gave her a hearty kiss, and took another good cry.

Biddy did not return till the next day, and to her astonishment she found that the "ould lady," as she called her, was constantly invading her domain with young Mrs. Wharton, and after some unintelligible mutterings about "two mis-thresses," she quietly yielded to the presence and the help of the two, when she was preparing meals, and in consequence, Emily Wharton now adds *good cooking* to the list of her other accomplishments, as we would advise all young ladies, whether married or not, to do.

THE PRAIRIE WAIF.

BY E. W. DEWEES.

A YOUTH was traversing on horseback one of our great western prairies.

A leather saddle-bag slung over his horse, contained his wearing apparel, and in a knapsack, which was strapped in soldier fashion to his back, were a compass and a spy-glass—instruments as indispensable to the voyager on the prairie sea, as to him who navigates the deep.

The patient horse plodded his toilsome way through the tall grass, which in its rank luxuriousness greatly impeded his progress.

From time to time the young rider glanced behind him at the sun, which was beginning to dye the western sky with gorgeous sunset hues, and then looked earnestly and anxiously forward.

Stopping his horse at last, he took his glass from the knapsack, and after a careful scrutiny, a quiet smile broke over his grave, young face, and he murmured, as he replaced the instrument,

"The hollow tree at last!"

Guiding his horse in the direction toward which he had looked, the object mentioned soon became apparent—a tree of gigantic dimensions, but hollow, and almost dead, which stood like a sentinel at the outpost between the prairie and the common land.

The rider, with what speed he could, approached it; but it was not till he emerged from the high grass within a few rods of the tree, that he perceived, to his great surprise, that a little child was standing all alone beneath the huge, rugged branches.

It was a little girl about five or six years old, and as beautiful as a veritable fairy, who stood in an expectant attitude gazing eagerly up into the tree.

As she heard the rider approaching she partly turned her head, and made a motion desiring silence: and then remained, with her little finger still held up, and with an earnest smile on her bright face, still gazing upward.

Hugh Westering, for that was the youth's name, thought he had never seen anything so beautiful—had he been an artist, in fact, as he was in feeling, he would have wished to model the lovely child just as she stood and looked, as

the personification of "Hope." He paused a moment in admiration, and then slowly approached a little nearer.

"Do not make a noise!" said the little girl, coming to meet him.

"Why not?" asked Hugh, softly, respecting her commands.

"Oh," she answered, "because I am expecting my owl to come out now. He is in the hollow tree—he has been there all day, and he would not come down, though I have tried hard to coax him. But I think he is coming now—he came out only a little later last night, and I saw him put out his head just now. And look there," she added, with a joyous laugh, "what a nice feast I have got ready for him."

Hugh looked where she pointed, and saw on the grass a number of flat, oval stones set out in regular tea-table order. On these stones were piled up blackberries, whortleberries, ground-nuts, fresh hazel-nuts, and some pieces of dry bread. Little bouquets of the rich prairie flowers, bound together by blades of grass, were placed around—a more tasteful little tea-table could not have tempted Queen Titania herself. Hugh was becoming more and more interested in this lovely little one, who, though thus solitary, and apparently deserted in so dreary a spot, had, resting secure in her innocence, and knowing nought of evil, felt nought of fear. He determined to unravel the mystery of her being where she was, and dismounting, he left his poor, tired horse to pick a supper much to his liking from the grass, while he approached the child. She clapped her hands gleefully as she saw his intention of joining her, and said,

"Oh, you're coming to my supper! I'm so glad. You are better even than the owl."

Hugh smiled at the meagre compliment, and seated himself by invitation opposite to one of the stones which was playing the part of plate.

The little hostess helped him plentifully to her really delicious berries and nuts, chattering in childish fashion all the time about "the tea-party being begun, and how sorry the owl," (which she every now and then declared she saw peeping at them from the tree) "how sorry he must be that he had not come when she asked him—but it was not too late yet, if he was not

too shy, and did not mind his country manners, and not being used to parties"—this last with a little air of childish importance.

Hugh at length interrupted her merry talk, to question her seriously as to who she was, and how she came to be all alone in such a strange place.

His interrogations seemed instantly to recall the child from the land of dreams, where she had been wandering, to this world of realities and sorrow. Her smiles and laughter changed to a look of distress, and tears rolled rapidly down her cheeks as she told Hugh her story in a childish, broken way.

It appeared from what she said, that her mother had been left a widow in her solitary home, which lay in the wilderness just beyond the prairie. Unable to cope with the difficulties of her position, and far from either friends or neighbors, she had set out with her child to endeavor to cross the prairie in order to reach a more settled part of the country.

Ere long, however, the lonely woman, who had no idea of the dangers of the enterprize she had undertaken, became lost and bewildered in the pathless waste. Fortunately her stock of provisions was ample, and did not fail her; but the anxiety and fatigue she underwent was so great, that when she was able to discern from a distance the topmost branches of the beacon tree, for which her aching eyes had strained in vain for many long days, her strength, sustained till then by excitement and fears for her child, failed utterly. She sunk down among the prairie grass, poor, weary, heart-broken traveller, to die on the borders of the promised land which her foot was never to tread.

To the child she gave her earnest, dying charges to loiter not when she should be no more, but to take their remaining provision and proceed strait onward till she should reach the hollow tree, where she bade her remain, knowing probably that there the child would be in comparative safety, and could scarcely fail to be soon discovered by travellers passing a spot so well known. Alas, for the dying mother, who could make no better provision for the orphan she was leaving!

The weeping little one concluded her sad story, by saying she had only stopped just long enough to lay prairie flowers all round dear mamma, and then had come strait on, just as she said, till she had come to the tree the night before.

"Mother told me to wait here and God would provide for me," she added, with a tone of doubt in her voice, as though she asked Hugh to settle

the question which had arisen in her lonely, little heart.

"And so He will—He has," answered Hugh, much moved, and without another word he lifted the child to his saddle, and springing after her, he folded her closely to his bosom beneath his warm cloak, and rode carefully homeward.

Hugh Westering, though still a youth in years, was a man whose youthful buoyancy was gone, owing to a great early disappointment.

He had been deeply attached to a beautiful girl of his native place, Salem, Massachusetts. She had given him every assurance of affection, and, notwithstanding their youthfulness, they were betrothed with the consent of friends. Happening, however, to attract the attention of a handsomer and gayer man, the fickle girl lightly broke her troth with the utmost levity and heartlessness.

Unfortunately Hugh was but too sincerely attached to this unworthy object. His feelings were naturally uncommonly deep and constant, and he felt the shock of this unexpected blow to his inmost being. He could find no solace in the reflection that the idol he had worshipped had proved herself a false goddess, unworthy a true man's homage—that he found the hardest thought of all to bear.

The noble nature can better endure sorrow than humiliation; and what humiliation so keen as the degradation of the being dearer far than self.

The sorrow and agitation this unhappy affair caused Hugh occasioned a severe illness, which for a time threatened his life. When he recovered, he gathered together his means, and leaving forever a place which had become hateful to him, sought a home such as suited the gloomy and misanthropic state of his mind in the forests of the West.

His mother, a plain woman of the Quaker faith, whose whole affections were centered in her only child, accompanied him.

For three long toilsome years had they lived in their lonely home. Hugh found a stern pleasure in the fierce struggle by which the backwoodsman subdues nature; who does not willingly yield her freedom, and compels her to serve him and minister to his wants; but his heart had lain cold and dead in his bosom.

Now, for the first time in all that period, he felt it stir, as though to new life, as he folded the lonely and deserted little orphan closely to him. While she remained awake he listened with a kind of rapture to the music of her innocent prattle, and when she fell asleep in his arms, he bowed his head over her, and silent tears, the first he had shed since his great

sorrow, fell in the darkness, as he thanked God for giving him at last something for his lonely, aching heart to love.

Though it was not many miles from the outskirts of the prairie to Hugh's forest home, it was quite dark ere he reached it. It was but an humble-looking place, the house, though large, being built of logs, as nearly all the dwellings in those remote regions are.

The traveller seemed to have been expected—a boy was waiting outside the house, and came forward with a warm greeting to "Mr. Hugh," and the door was at the same time opened by a middle-aged woman in Quaker dress and cap, who asked,

"Is it thee, Hugh?"

"Yes, mother," replied the young man, as he carefully dismounted with the sleeping child in his arms. Entering the house, he deposited her on a lounge in an inner room, and turning toward the wondering old lady, simply ejaculated the word "there," in a tone of relief and satisfaction. The satisfaction, however, appeared to be by no means mutual. A frown of displeasure darkened friend Mary Westering's brow, and she exclaimed in a tone of impatience,

"Good Lord save thy wits, son, what has thee brought home now?"

"Only a poor, lost child, mother."

"Only a child! and what will it be next? Last week it was a poor, lame horse, which had been turned out on the prairie to die, which you brought home to tend, and nurse, and feed—before that it was a wounded deer—I have been pestered all my life with thy lame dogs and stray cats, and now it is *only* a child, I am to play foster-mother to."

"Mother!" said Hugh, in a tone of gentle reproof, "thy words belie thy kind and tender heart. If I am compassionate to the helpless and suffering, when I meet them, from whose early teachings have I learnt the lesson? God knows, mother," he continued, in a lower tone, and a voice he strove to make steady, "my heart has been hard and cold enough since the bitter time now past when Mary betrayed me—since then I have never felt it soften to any human being as now to this poor child. Mother, wilt thou not love her—or at least bear with her for my sake?"

It was the first time Hugh had ever alluded to the sorrow of his youth—the first time the name of the false maiden had been uttered between them, and the mother knew well how much it had cost her silent and reserved son to make this appeal; thoroughly melted, she answered with tears standing in her eyes,

"Yea, that I will, Hugh, and bless her from my inmost heart if she prove to thee a comfort and solace, for greatly thou needest both."

And so it was, that the little orphan girl was welcomed into friend Mary's heart. At first, for the sake of the beloved son; but once admitted, the little one maintained her ground, and even conquered it anew in her own right. She became the pet and darling of the old lady, and as for Hugh, from the time he took the poor, deserted little wanderer in his arms, he surrendered to her his whole heart. He tended her—waited on her—amused her—sat by her when ill all through the long night—and was in all things her most obedient servant.

He spent several hours every day instructing her, and when he was working in the fields she was his constant companion. While he was busy with his farm work, she would nestle down in some shady corner, in sight, and make plays, and hold long conversations all by herself. A flower, a stone, a leaf, a bud, anything would serve for a foundation for her to build her fancies on; and Hugh, formerly so grave and sad, often paused in his work, and stood listening and laughing at these imaginary discourses, when the child fancied herself unobserved.

Sometimes he would approach her, and with a heart overflowing with love and joy would ask, "Art thou happy, my little prairie bird?" and she soon learned to know that nothing in the world delighted him so much as to hear her reply, in the Quaker phraseology, which sounds so quaintly sweet on childish lips,

"Yes, dear Hugh, as happy as thou could'st wish."

Nothing is so grateful and flattering to a man, particularly one whose affections have once been made the sport of treachery or falsehood, as the affection of children, since it bears so indisputably the stamp of genuine honesty that none can doubt its sincerity. Hugh could not but see that his little foundling preferred him to all the world, and of course the fact increased his tenderness for her.

Thus pleasantly passed away the little girl's childhood—no one ever came to claim her, though her romantic story was often told to such travellers as not unfrequently sought a temporary shelter beneath Hugh's hospitable roof. Hugh, therefore, in course of time, lost the dread of losing her, which had troubled him so much at first.

A few years rolled swiftly by, and as by some magic, the playful child has been transformed into a beautiful, bewitching young woman.

Hugh could only gaze and wonder—could it be

the vision of loveliness which he saw sitting about his humble dwelling, and seeming to irradiate each spot she visited by the mere sunshine of her beauty—could it be the very same being, the same little Fanny, whom he had found under the old prairie-tree, and carried home, like a lost lamb, in his bosom?

Fanny was about eighteen years old, when it happened that a company of United States soldiers, on their overland way to California, a country which was beginning to attract great attention, claimed Hugh's hospitality for the night, and both house and barn were crowded by the travellers.

Among the guests at the house was, of course, the commanding officer, young Lieutenant Howard, of Philadelphia. His manners were those of a gentleman of refinement; his conversation was lively and brilliant; he was, besides, extremely handsome, and as he appeared to be greatly struck by Fanny's loveliness, and devoted himself to her with a courtly gallantry, to which the country maiden was all unused, it will be conceded that a more dangerous visitor could scarcely have entered the forest home, if Fanny wished to continue to

"Walk in maiden meditation—fancy free."

But however willingly the young soldier would have lingered in this Eden which he had found in the wilderness, duty summoned him on the morrow to resume his journey. He accordingly "marshalled his men," and having courteously thanked his host and hostess, and taken a somewhat tender leave of Fanny, he mounted his horse to depart. But ere he had secured his seat on the saddle, the animal swerved violently aside, owing to a sudden fright, and the rider was dashed forcibly to the ground.

His leg was broken by the fall, and as the accident of course unfitted him for travel, he remained in friend Mary's hands, while the troop proceeded on their journey without him.

Of necessity the young man was domiciled for many weeks in Hugh's cottage, and never was invalid more carefully nursed and cared for. Friend Mary was an excellent nurse, and unremitting in her attentions, and both Hugh and Fanny, but more frequently the latter, were constantly summoned to her aid.

Young Howard, on his part, seemed to have no idea of playing the uninteresting and querulous invalid. He exerted his really uncommon talents to render himself agreeable and entertaining, and his dark eyes told eloquent tales to Fanny. Will the simple country girl have wit to read them?

Friend Mary, simple-minded and unobservant, saw nothing of what was going on, but Hugh had perceived from the very first what a powerful impression the young girl's beauty had produced on the young soldier.

It was therefore no surprise to him when, one evening, before the youth was to resume his journey westward, he laid before him satisfactory papers in proof of his respectability and character, and demanded permission to address his adopted daughter.

Hugh had not an objection to urge. The proposal seemed in every way honorable and desirable; yet his heart sickened within him as he listened to the stranger's voice. Even the words in which his petition was urged grated on his ear—for the first time he heard Fanny spoken of as his daughter with pain. In vain he mentally chid himself, and bade himself consider the advantageousness of Lieutenant Howard's offer, so much more brilliant than he could have hoped for Fanny—so honorable both to himself and her. He could not persuade himself that the young soldier's proposal had caused him anything but the keenest anguish of spirit.

So greatly was he agitated and overcome by the conversation we have alluded to, that he was twice obliged to leave the apartment, ere he could recover composure to grant the young lover the privilege he felt he had no right to withhold.

The next morning, Fanny rose early, as had been agreed upon between her and friend Mary, to preside at the early breakfast prepared for the parting guest.

Hugh, who had passed a sleepless night, and had been long up, heard her lively call as she passed his door, but he made no response, remaining in his room till the sound of a horse galloping away assured him of the young soldier's departure. How could he doubt the answer he had received?

He descended slowly and sadly to the room below, but he assumed a cheerful air as he entered the apartment—at least he could spare Fanny the pain of knowing the suffering she innocently caused him—she should never blush for the folly of one she had revered and respected as a father. At least he could keep his secret—had he not guarded it well—almost from his own heart even—for two long years?

Fanny with somewhat heightened color and downcast eyes, was busying herself with the breakfast things as he entered.

Hugh, with the desire a despairing man has of hearing a dreaded certainty affirmed, said with an attempt at pleasantry,

"Well, Fanny, dear, how is it? Has he spoken?"

"Yes, Hugh."

"And your reply?"

Fanny blushed deeply, and turned away her head.

"I want courage to tell you my reply," she said.

"Take courage, Fanny," replied Hugh, in a voice which told how sadly his own was failing him.

Fanny was silent a moment, and then looking up at Hugh with her candid blue eyes filled with tears, said in an agitated voice,

"Yes, I *will* take courage, dear Hugh—though it costs me a struggle—for your sake as well as mine. I told him I did not, and could not love him, because I already loved another."

"Indeed, Fanny?" cried Hugh, completely taken by surprise, "how can that be when you have known no other?"

"The person I love I have known all my life," said Fanny, raising her eyes to Hugh's face, "and he has loved me well these two years, though he little guessed I knew it."

She smiled through her blushes and tears, and Hugh changing color, stammered,

"Ah, Fanny, can I, dare I think——"

"Think anything," said Fanny, giving way to a violent fit of weeping, which she sought in vain longer to restrain, "except that I am bold and unmaidenly. Or forgive me, dear Hugh, if you do think so—but it was the only return I have ever had it in my power to make for all your goodness to me."

"Forgive you, Fanny! Oh, I bless you and thank you from my inmost heart—you have made me the happiest creature on God's earth."

"Except one," smiled Fanny, laying her girlish cheek affectionately on the rough-coated breast to which she was clasped; and if we may read aright the expression of that sweet young face, we must believe it no mistaken feeling which has made her reject youth and beauty for the sake of a man, plain-featured and no longer young. There is no mistaking that look of perfect love and trust—deep—earnest—entire.

Who shall judge of a girl's fancies? "The wind bloweth whither it listeth," and even so waywardly does woman bestow her love. Yet seldom, indeed, does it happen that any man is so fortunate as to win the entire affections of the same individual thrice—as child, girl and woman.

A WEDDING EIGHTY YEARS AGO.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

THE front of the Aylesford mansion was a blaze of light on the evening in question. The uproar of carriages, arriving and depositing their precious freights, was almost deafening at times. Between lanes of servants the guests passed up to the imposing doorway, and entering the carved and wainscoted hall, which was now fairly dazzling with light, were shown up the wide staircase to the chambers set aside for dressing-rooms. It was a splendid spectacle to see the proud dames, attended by their lovely daughters, come pouring down the ample, heavily balustraded steps, and flock toward the drawing-rooms like stately birds. The rustle of stiff brocades, and the fluttering sound of fans, were mingled with a rich, low murmur of animated conversations, carried on in whispers, that was like a soft undertone to a gay piece of music. Nor were the cavaliers less gorgeous-looking than their partners. The age of dark and sober hues had not yet wholly usurped that of gay colors and silken fabrics for gentlemen's wear; and the *petit maitre* of the day thought himself unfit for female society, if his ruffles were not of the choicest lace, his coat and waistcoat elaborately embroidered, and his white hands sparkling with jewels. All was a blaze of light and grandeur. Swords jingled; diamond shoe-buckles flashed; necklaces sparkled till they rivaled the fair wearer's eyes; and the air was fragrant everywhere with the exquisite perfumes of the powder shaken from dozens of lovely heads whenever they moved. From a military band, stationed close by in the garden, came bursts of proud music continually, that made many a charming little foot move impatiently, and stirred the blood even of the old.

It would be impossible for us to describe half the superb dresses that made their *début* on that occasion; but our fair readers would never forgive us if we omitted those of Mrs. Warren and the bride. The former wore a petticoat of crimson satin, thick as a board, the very sight of which would drive a modern belle crazy with envy. Over this was a skirt of rich, gold-flowered brocade; the bodice being made of the same material; and sleeves that, reaching to the elbow, were trimmed with deep, yellow, old lace, of almost fabulous value. But the head-

dress of Mrs. Warren was the crowning triumph of the good lady's toilet. This coiffure was, in fact, the masterpiece of the French artist, whom Mrs. Warren had engaged three months before, and who had spent most of his leisure moments since in studying out this grand achievement of his genius. It rose nearly two feet in height, a perfect mass of interwoven ribbons, curls and jewels, almost rivaling that, which, a few years later, gave a European reputation to the celebrated Lemard, hair-dresser to Marie Antoinette, because he had consumed in it upwards of fourteen yards of gauze. It was, in short, a miniature tower of Babel, done in hair, pomatum and powder. The dowager was as proud of this *chef d'œuvre* as her artist, and had but one drawback indeed on her satisfaction, which was that her cousin, Lord Danville, could not behold this miracle of art, taste and beauty.

The bride's dress followed the fashion of the hour less servilely, having been made subservient to her own excellent taste. Her hair was drawn back entirely from her face, as was the prevailing mode; a style that eminently suited her regular features; but instead of being raised into an enormous tower, it was simply combed over an ordinary cushion, a long curl or two being allowed to fall behind each ear. It was slightly powdered on this occasion, but with silver *mareschale*, which produced an indescribably brilliant effect against her fair complexion; and further ornamented by a wreath of delicate flowers placed on one side. On her snowy, swan-like neck, she wore a superb necklace of diamonds, which had belonged to her mother. Her petticoat was of rich, white satin, the bottom being trimmed with wreaths of flowers; while her gown was of rose-colored brocade, wrought with silver flowers, and looped back from the under skirt with bunches of ribbons and flowers. Her stomacher was of costly lace, interspersed with diamonds. Her sleeves, like her aunt's, were tight to the elbow, where they were trimmed with a double ruffle of lace, whose fabric of frost-work set off the taper and rounded arm, heightening even its statuesque beauty. Her shoes were of white satin, pointed at the toes, and with high, red heels, a fashion which showed to the greatest advantage a lady's instep. She

carried a Watteau fan, a gift from the French ambassador, worth almost its weight in gold.

Such was Kate's costume, and amid all that splendid circle, she was, beyond rivalry, the loveliest. Nor was the bridegroom, who appeared simply in the uniform of his rank, less conspicuous among the array of magnificently clad gentlemen. His air of command and of manly dignity had, indeed, but one rival there; and that was in Washington himself, who then, as ever, "towered pre-eminent." The grand, yet simple dignity of that heroic form; the quiet authority in the somewhat severe face; and the unaffected, yet awe-inspiring manner: ah! what pen can describe these, which cotemporary painters confessed themselves unable to limn, and which the tongues of his most gifted compatriots fell short of depicting. But, though every eye turned first on the commander-in-chief, (even the eyes of those suspected of secretly wishing well to the royal arms,) the next object of admiration, at least among the ladies, was the bridegroom, as that of the gentlemen was the bride. Even the graceful, French noblemen, who were present, altogether failed of attracting attention by the side of these.

The ceremony was impressively performed, the bridegroom making the responses in a firm voice, and the bride in one a little fluttered. After a proper interval had elapsed, the dancing began. But our fair readers must not suppose that those high-bred dames permitted themselves, as their descendants do, to be taken familiarly about the waist by a comparative stranger, and whirled around the room in a schottish, or other waltz, as if the giddy pair were human spinning-tops. Nor must they imagine that the cavalier and his partner, with arms a-kimbo and faces alternately turned toward each other and averted, went stamping up

and down the apartment, like wild Indians, in a polka. They must not even think that the gentlemen was at liberty to swing his partner till her wrists ached, whenever he approached her in a quadrille, for that now comparatively obsolete dance had not then yet come into fashion. The minuet was the only dance sufficiently courtly for that high-bred age. It required something more than ordinary grace also to elicit admiration in that princely pastime; for it was performed in single couples, and with the eyes of the whole room watching for the slightest display of awkwardness. When the minuet, however, was danced to perfection, as it was more than once during this evening, it elicited that complete satisfaction in the beholder, which any finished work of art always produces. The gentleman leading out his fair partner as ceremoniously as if she was a queen, bowed over her hand till he bent almost to her waist; while she curtsied in return, with lashes drooping on her cheek, the color rising into her face, and her damask-gown rustling as it sank to the floor. All this had a grace, a stateliness, and an air of chivalrous worship, such as, alas! we never see in a modern ball-room. Then the exquisite ease with which the partners subsequently moved through the aristocratic dance, gliding to the slow, measured, stately music; the cavalier inclining his powdered head profoundly, with his hand on his heart, whenever he touched the hand of his companion; while she performed each evolution with lightness of step, a tender coyness, and a formal grace, which seemed to be the poetical realization of that lordly and perhaps pompous, yet knightly age. When the bride executed the minuet, she carried off all plaudits, however, for notwithstanding others danced well, she danced surpassingly so.

From "Kate Aylesford."

MARIE TREVOR.

BY MRS. M. A. DENISON.

[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by Charles J. Peterson, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 289.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LOST FOUND.

In a richly furnished room, on her couch, reclined the Lady Walden. Beauty no longer gave radiance to her face, but the pensive, careworn look that lingered among the ravages suffering and sorrow had made, imparted to her countenance a purely spiritual, saint-like expression. Her hair was so white that one could hardly distinguish the line of silver that parted it from her pale brow. She wore a cap of fine material—a cambrie robing-gown, and as she lay, she ever and anon pressed her hand above her eyes, as if she wept. For the moment, shut out the light of the world. She had evidently been weeping, and the cause seemed to be—her husband. He sat by her side—his head bowed on both hands, his posture one of deep humiliation.

A low, trembling voice broke the silence of the room, as the lady said, "It would ill become me, perhaps, near the grave as I am, to deny forgiveness to an erring fellow creature. Henry, if you had only told me this before our marriage! I loved you too well not to forgive, even then—and oh! I believe heaven has punished me for my idolatrous affection—but had I known all, this double sin had been prevented. Now I will not chide you—you have suffered, oh! how much more than myself, poor Henry."

"You were an angel!" whispered a broken voice.

"No, only a weak mortal, and yet heaven strengthens me to do my duty. Do not sob this way, dear Henry, I cannot bear it. I feel we have both been very sinful thus to mourn for eighteen long years—thus to defer the exquisite happiness of forgiveness. We both needed chastening—yet our selfishness has prolonged it, and but added torture. Come, cheer up, God has not forgotten us. Look at our son, noble, beautiful boy! I, at least, deserved not such a treasure, for I have lightly cherished it. Come, let me tell you what I intended to do this morning. Neither of us have many years to live—let us then im-

prove what little time remains. Look how the wind steals over those roses, catching perfume before it flies, to bear to other banks of sweets—so let time pass over us, bearing the perfume of good deeds to the better home. To-morrow is our boy's freedom day. We must forget the past in order to be benefited by the future—and I would have no sombre memory darken to-morrow's festival. From to-day, therefore, I have determined that not a word of our misfortune shall ever pass my lips. Is it a thing to mourn over—the thought that our beautiful girl has been these eighteen years among the blest in heaven? No! rather to rejoice, while we feel her gentle ministrations. What do you say, my dear husband, that forever after to-day we bury the past?"

A silent pressure of the hand was the baronet's only response, and clasping his wife to his bosom, he hurried with a lightened heart to his own room, there to thank God for His many mercies.

"Did you ever see Lady Walden looking so well before since her great misfortune?" asked a noble lord of an old dowager, who had in her turn expressed surprise on the same account quite often to sundry persons.

"No," replied the old lady—"I was saying a great many times that it was marvelous she gave this party on Lord Henry's freedom day; let me see—yes, this is the very first since; and—but then she is changed—changed, oh! yes—Lady Walden is changed—very—very," she added, dropping her voice, and repeating the word after the custom of good old ladies.

"Lord Henry is a fine young man."

"Yes—but I fancy he has grown a trifle thin since he travelled; and—mercy! did you see him start? No wonder, there is irresistible attraction in that young person's face—who is she? I mean the one just entering with that noble-looking woman; good heavens! what a likeness!"

"Likeness—of whom—where?"

"Why to the Waldens—to Lord Henry, for instance; look at them now—look, look—did you ever meet with anything so striking?"

"Y—e—s," said the other, hesitatingly, "there is a—a—yes, a striking likeness, as you say; by the way I must find who she is;" and the little, youthful old man tripped away, keeping time to the music of the band outside.

Marie (for it was she) soon found herself an object of immense interest; this and that one peering from all sides—some giving a stealthy, well-bred glance—others forgetting politeness in their curiosity, and staring as it has been said only Yankees can stare; but young America sometimes finds more than her match in old England—there is not so much difference as some suppose, especially in the matter of rudeness.

The excitement at last became so intense that it attracted the attention of Lady Walden.

"They say there is quite a wonder of beauty and youth present, in the person of a young girl," she said to her husband—"what does it mean?—who have we invited out of our circle?"

"Nobody," replied the baronet—"this is a young American girl whom Lady *Manget* has brought; it seems she is known to no one but her—really quite a sweet young creature—but why she has chaperoned her here I cannot imagine. However, she must be a person of distinction, or——"

"My dear Lady Walden, let me introduce you to my new acquisition," said a sweet voice, interrupting the baronet—and the dark-eyed Lady *Manget* presented the beautiful girl, remarking as she did so, "My young American friend has become quite a belle."

"A sweeter vision never crossed my path," said Lady Walden, mentally, feasting her eyes upon the speaking features—the rich tints of the cheeks, the sparkling eyes of such clear, deep blue, and, stranger though she was, she took both hands in hers and gazed with a sad kind of searching look into the angelic countenance. For an instant a sudden paleness overspread her features, and she shut her eyes with a slight moan—but almost as quickly regaining composure, she led the young creature to a seat, and sat herself beside her.

"I should not keep you from the dance," she said, in a low and remarkably sweet tone.

"You do not detain me at all," replied Marie, "I much prefer to be quiet awhile; I know not why," she added, mentally, "but I feel so strongly attracted toward this lovely woman."

"I want you to tell me all about America and American ladies," said Lady Walden, with gentle earnestness; "it seems to me that your men are all brave, and your women all fair."

"You do us honor," replied Marie, blushing: "it was not wholly the compliment that called

out the rosy red. She saw not far from her, leaning against a draperied pillow, the noble young heir, Lord Henry, regarding her with passionate, soul-searching glances—a fire in his eye, a bloom on his cheek that added new beauty—she knew the light and the flush were kindled by her presence, and a pang shot through her heart as she thought perchance he could not conquer his ardent love. But soon rallying, she delighted Lady Walden with a vivid description of some parts of her country, the customs and prejudices, the virtues and follies of society.

Her listener expressed herself highly gratified, and gazed with growing wonder on the eloquent young girl, when looking suddenly up she descried her son standing in the posture of one who would seek farther opportunity of acquaintance.

"Come here, Henry," she cried, beckoning—"Miss, I beg your pardon."

"Le Dunlap," Marie responded, trembling a little as she put her hand in that of Lord Henry, "we have met before."

"Ah! indeed," replied the lady, glancing uneasily from Marie to her son, and noting the trepidation, the nervousness that had come over him.

"I had the pleasure of seeing him at my—my foster-father's house," said Marie, for the first time feeling the painful awkwardness of her position, her inability to speak of those whose memory she revered as filial love dictated. They talked together, and now Lady Walden seemed to feel a curious interest, clasping her hands, starting, bending forward to look at them, sometimes with features almost rigid, and a painful working of the lips.

"It is so very strange, so wonderful," she would murmur, "how like they are. She would have been just such another—but I have promised—I will not regret the past. Is it possible? Can Henry love her—can he love her?"

This she murmured seeing the young man fix upon Marie one despairing glance—turn pale—rise and abruptly leave her side. Lady Walden had not observed the growing and intense excitement visible through the crowded rooms, to those who were not like her absorbed in the effort to subdue old memories. It was certain though, that there was a marvelous amount of whispering and shrugging of shoulders—that persons passed and repassed the lady and Marie, looking at both with singular interest; that the faces of some were quite pale and full of awe, while others seemed almost bursting with the effort of keeping a joyful secret; that the band sent out its shrilly melody with new zest, and

that outside, the shouts were prolonged far and wide. There was a rumor floating in the air that assumed various shapes; some said that the child-stealer had returned, that she had become known, and the baronet had instantly caused her arrest—others that an impostor was striving to palm off a girl on the Waldens as their daughter. All the marvelous stories took hue from the extravagance or imagination of the gossips.

It was certain that a note had been given to the baronet, that after its perusal he grew "as white as a sheet," and nearly upset two old dowagers in his rush from the hall; it is certain that the handsome, stately woman had been seen in close conference with him.

It is certain that after the interval of some twenty minutes he returned, yet whiter than when he went out, with the large, handsome woman by his side, also looking extremely agitated; and everybody saw the stranger walk up to Marie, gently touch her beautiful curls, part one, and turn to the baronet, who immediately making an effort to speak and stretch out his hands, fell heavily backward, and amidst the rush and confusion was carried from the room.

"What does it all mean?" whispered the alarmed crowd.

"What has happened?" cried Lady Walden, springing like one frantic to her feet.

"My sweet sister," said a low voice at Marie's side, "my own darling sister," and her hand was clasped, an arm circled her waist—those deep blue eyes bent in holy love upon hers. Lord Henry stood beside her.

"Pray be calm," he added, in a lower voice, leading her through a near entrance, Lady Walden following by the tearful entreaty of the stranger, "do not let our mother hear you—be calm—you tremble—all shall be explained, my sweet sister—how could I help but love you when I first saw you?"

A faint shriek burst from the white lips of Lady Walden, as they entered the private room where sat the baronet, feebly supporting himself, and audibly repeating again and again, "My God, I thank Thee."

"My wife—oh, let us be humble this day; come nearer, sweet child—come and behold your parents who have sorrowed for you night and day—come," he cried, with outstretched hands.

But Lady Walden sprang forward, and catching Marie in her arms, she burst forth like one inspired: and such words surely seldom issue from mortal lips! It was a song of Thanksgiving, a Miriam chant—and as she stood there, her hair falling once more glossily from under the confines of her cap—her blue eyes upraised, her

slender figure dilating—her looks and tones and gestures overflowing with a love that had found full vent for its long pent-up emotion, she looked almost celestial. Marie from the first had eagerly hung upon her every word: and now that she knew the extent of her bliss, she was nearly overpowered. And at the word mother, when she essayed to speak it, what new and wonderful feelings flooded in upon her heart! Oh! it was a fit scene for angels to rejoice over. And with what mournful tenderness did Lady Walden turn to Mrs. Le Dunlap. "You have been, through the workings of an ever wise Providence, a mother to my child," she said. "Her heart has laid upon your bosom—you have led her to womanhood safely and happily. Heaven knows what we have suffered—but the past is gone—this moment repays me ten-fold; we have all sorrowed—let us all be reconciled."

At this instant Marie—or, as we should call her, young Lady Aimee—turned and springing toward her foster-mother, fell sobbing upon her bosom.

"You will not forget me, Marie, though I have been unjust to you—you will still cherish my memory?"

"Forever, and ever, and ever," said Lady Aimee, solemnly, still clinging to her: "oh! my own, dear mother," she added, turning to Lady Walden, "you will let me love her, won't you?—she has been an angel of goodness to me—she took me from poverty—she cherished me as she would her own, in a home of luxury; she has done more for me than tongue can tell—I may still love her dearly, very dearly."

"Love her, my child," said a broken voice, and Aimee was in a moment by her father's side, pressed again and again to his heart.

Meanwhile the crowds below were growing impatient. Everybody, it may be supposed, had exhibited an unfathomable amount of sagacity, protesting that they had had a warning of it all: they had thought of this remarkable coincidence, and the other wonderful feature: and above all, had been impressed that "*something was going to happen.*"

Lady Walden preferred being retired for the remainder of the evening—but young Lady Aimee entered the great saloon leaning upon the arm of her father—Lord Henry on the other side, his face absolutely radiant with his new-born happiness. Then what congratulations! How wealth and loveliness, youth and age united in welcoming the long-lost pearl; how beautiful seemed all things—the lights danced with a brilliancy just acquired—the bands had pressed closer to the door, pouring in triumph strains

that moved the pulse with a quick, rapturous beat—the peasantry filled all the air with their thrilling shouts, and the windows were crowded with honest faces, striving for a glance at the new-found lady-child of the baronet. Happy voices resounded on every side, and in a kind of bewildering joy the young and lovely creature moved on, ever and anon glancing upward to the glad face of her father, or the beaming features of Lord Henry, whom she had at last learned to love. Amidst all this glow of heart she did not forget the past. If one form had been there—one more than noble face, lighted up with the glorious pride of intellect—if *he* had been there to share her pleasure.

"Can I not read your thoughts, sister?" asked Lord Henry, playfully.

A blush was her only answer.

"If Frederic were here," he said, archly.

"Let us go to mother," she replied, answering his look with a glance full of expression—"oh! dear Henry, can it be reality, that I have found so many loved ones?"

"Aye! indeed, a blessed reality to us," he replied, kissing her upturned brow.

It was nearly grey dawn before Lady Aimee retired, for her mother was unwilling to yield up the sweet form that laid against her bosom, living years of deep and tender happiness in moments, and feeling in her heart the fresh tendrils of her love reaching up from their withered stems, and growing strong and green again in the sunlight of her new existence.

"I am so afraid you will vanish from before my eyes," she would say, looking down with tears hanging on her smiles, "it seems so like a blessed vision that I fear to move lest the fabric shall dissolve—but you need rest, my dear daughter; one more kiss, and I will go with you myself to the door of your room."

"How beautiful—oh, how beautiful!" cried the enraptured girl, pausing in the centre of the large apartment. A bedstead with soft silken hangings, gleaming with golden embroidery, stood at one end, glittering in the faint light. The richest and most delicate furniture disposed in graceful grouping—exquisite statuary—every thing pure, refined, and exalting in the noble pictures, met her delighted vision. Upon a little table inlaid with ivory rested some rare volumes. She carelessly opened one, and on the fly-leaf, to her astonishment, saw written, "Dedicated to our angel child."

And upon the covering of the bed were the same words delicately embroidered—everywhere she found them—everywhere these silent, but beautiful tokens of the place she had held in the

memory of her mother. Lady Walden had taken a mournful pleasure in thus decorating this apartment sacred to her child—what she had hitherto spent in ornaments on every anniversary of birth-days, she had laid out in adding to this room, giving the surplus money to the poor. It seemed as if she must have had a kindly presentiment that it was not all in vain.

Before one of the little tables, and on which stood the light, a superb cushion was placed; and as Lady Aimee knelt to offer her prayer, she marked a richly bound Bible, open, with a mark placed at these words.

"Praise ye the Lord;

Praise God in his sanctuary.

Praise Him in the firmament of His power.

Praise Him for His mighty acts;

Praise Him according to His excellent greatness.

Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet:

Praise Him with the psalter and harp.

Praise Him with the timbrel and dance;

Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.

Praise Him upon the loud cymbals;

Praise Him upon the high sounding cymbals.

Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord,

Praise ye the Lord."

Fast fell her tears upon the holy words as she murmured, "I do praise Thee, oh! my heavenly Father; I do praise Thee for thy wonderful care and kindness."

"Amen!" said a low voice, and turning, Aimee found herself looked fast in the passionate embrace of her foster-mother.

"Believe that I love you as much as ever," whispered the beautiful girl, as she clung to her.

"My expiation is not yet done," replied Mrs. Le Dunlap, smiling through her tears, and kissing her affectionately, "I must explain to you all the circumstances of your disappearance, and heaven grant that I may not look thoroughly contemptible and unpardonably sinful in your eyes." Then she recounted to her all the past from her infancy to the present moment.

"It seems like some wild romance," said Lady Aimee, lifting her wondering eyes, "yet my sympathies are with you—but did my father?" she shuddered, nor did she finish the sentence.

"He wished me to tell you all, nor spare him, my sweet one. It was his only crime—he has suffered beyond all mortal conception—he is a pure, good, holy-minded man now, through tribulation made perfect. You do not honor him less?"

"Oh! no—more; infinitely more for his humility, my noble father—but how did they recognize me?—how did they—you know they might, might—"

"Doubt my word," interposed Mrs. Le Dunlap, smiling, "surely they might—they had cause enough—but fortunately I remembered the little

silver look, the tiny curl of white hair that you have under your beautiful curls. It was a mark you were born with, and by that they knew my word was true."

"You will not go soon?" said Lady Aimee, again laying her hand on the shoulder of her foster-mother, for whom an intense love thrilled every fibre of her being, "oh! I cannot bear the thought that with all this honor and greatness I cannot have you too. I have strange fears when I begin to think—fears that my parents may be proud and wedded to their old family usages—that they may wish me to forget my friends—perhaps to forget—him," and she shuddered again.

"No, my love," returned Mrs. Le Dunlap, "all is right concerning Frederic. I have stated the whole matter to your father, who consents to your marriage in two years from now."

"But his home is in America."

"True—and there if you are faithful to him will your home be. So anxious are your parents for your future happiness, and so little do they care about honor and state, that they intend returning with you, and making a permanent home in America, leaving Lord Henry, your brother, as their representative. So be at rest, and if we are parted, God grant it may be but for a little while. Now rest all you can, you will not be disturbed to-day—good morning, and God bless you my precious, precious child."

CHAPTER XV.

ONE MORE SCENE IN THE COTTAGE.

"It was from you then, dear Rose, that the money came when poor William died—to you my Rose has been indebted for her education, and all of us to the snug home that shelters us."

So spoke a youthful-looking matron in widow's cap and weeds, as she sat beside the window of the old cottage home, with her hand in that of her sister-in-law.

Quite a group was there assembled on that same day: beautiful, rustic belles, bashful, handsome young men, the children of old farmer Goldfinch's sons—and the latter were there too—all but one; the youngest wearing on his grief-worn face smiles of joy that for many years had been banished to give place to the shadows of a settled melancholy. All were recounting the unexpected favors they had received from an unknown source; little dreaming that the long-lost from their household hearth were the good angels who ministered unto them.

Ruth and Rose had that day made themselves known. They learned with a mournful pleasure

that their old father yet lived, that he "babbled of green fields," and for years had been unconscious of the visible things about him.

Emaciated and bent double, the old, old man with his white locks hanging glistening over his shoulders, walked daily, under the protection of his little grandson, the youngest born, down to the daisy meadow, where his feeble sense yet took in the fresh scent of the new hay, or the floating incense of the hedge flowers. There he would walk and mutter of by-gone days. Sometimes he would fancy he was young again; and listen for the glad laugh of the beautiful twins, see them twining wreaths, hear their merry laughter, and call them the life and light of his soul. Then would pass in review before the crumbling wall of his memory the horrible vision of broken trust, departed innocence, death, and a shattered intellect; and he would sink groaning to the earth; and sometimes the fair-haired boy who led him, would be obliged to hurry back for the aid of a stronger arm than his, to force the old man home.

But of late they said he had been very quiet and tractable.

"And when shall we see him?" ventured Rose, in a broken voice.

"Now, for here he is with Willy," replied the widow, "he seems smiling and glad too: his step is quicker—what can it mean?"

"Oh! how shall I speak to my poor old father?" sobbed Rose, bursting into tears, "I who have been the unhappy cause of all his sorrow."

"Say nothing, dear sister," replied Ruth, with emotion, "or if we speak, let it be of old times when we were happy little children together, so we may draw his memory backward, and God may give him reason, who knows?"

All were silent as the old man entered. He seemed to feel that some unusual thing had happened, and casting his dim and aged eyes about, they rested on Ruth and Rose. He came forward, tottering, and stood near them with vague, troubled looks, scanned the features first of Ruth, then of Rose, shook his head slowly, and turning, hobbled to his accustomed seat.

Then bending over, he rested his head on both hands doubled over the top of his staff, muttering as was his wont.

"Oh! Ruth, don't, don't hold me back any longer," half shrieked Rose, bursting from her sister's grasp, and throwing herself before the feet of the poor old man, she cried, "oh! father, father, don't you know me? I am Rose, she who has brought your grey hairs with sorrow nearly to the grave. Oh! father, dear father,

look at me, speak to me—you *must* remember me, I am Rose—Rose, your child—do you forget that little twin child you called Rose?—father, dear, forsaken father, only say you know me, you *forgive* me, and I shall die in peace.”

“Little Rose—little Rose,” repeated the old man, lingering lovingly over the words, “little Rose—ah! she was a sweet angel, little Rose and little Ruth—let me see, they are gone—they had some other to love—a mission, a mission of trust, peace and blessedness—ah, yes, little Rose.”

“Oh! Ruth, Ruth, my heart will break; why did I come here?—he will never know me, and I have done this cruel thing.”

“Be calm, Rose,” replied Ruth, with that manner that betokened authority, and which instantly subdued her sister, who sank trembling and crouching closer to the floor. Then Ruth came forward, and silently placed one arm about the old man’s neck. It seemed to annoy him; he strove to throw it off—then looked uneasily up, saying, “who are you—who are you?”

“I am Ruth, father,” she only replied.

“Ruth—father—Ruth—father,” he repeated. “Ruth, I had a Ruth, and——”

“It is *me*, father, I am Ruth, the spirit of my mother who is in heaven, sent me here!”

“Are you from heaven?” he naively asked.

“No,” said Ruth, almost despairingly, “but I am your Ruth.”

“My Ruth, humph!”

“Yes, (her brother came forward and whispered her) you know they called her—the—the child-stealer, your Ruth,” she hesitatingly added.

“It is false,” exclaimed the old man, powerfully agitated—“it is false—they are hounds, hounds, coming to hunt my poor, innocent girl—and you, too, what do *you* mean?—do you dare call her *that*?”

“No, dear father,” cried Ruth, solemnly, with a silent prayer to heaven, “here I am, come back to comfort them all—I am innocent, as God has forgiven me.”

“Heaven be praised,” cried the old man, with streaming eyes, letting fall his cane as he raised his hands reverently—“God be praised—then you *have* come back, dear child, let me hold you to my heart. I knew you never were guilty—I knew it was all false.”

“And you *do* remember me then?” cried Ruth, almost overcome by the impression her statement had made.

“Yes, you are Ruth, you say,” said the old man, holding out his trembling fingers to pat her cheek, “but you have been gone, and you are changed, my child.”

“And you remember, Rose?” murmured Ruth, with a choking voice.

“Rose,” said the old man, pausing a moment, “Rose is dead—she died—did she die yesterday?”

“No, my father,” cried Rose, rising from her knees, “I did not die—I am Rose—do you not see me, living, waiting for your blessing?”

For an instant the old man bent his brows, and looked from side to side with a wild glare—then a strong light seemed to spread all over his countenance—he lifted himself upright, seized their hands in his trembling grasp, and cried in a loud, steady voice, “As God liveth, are ye my children?—is *this* Ruth—is this other Rose?”

“As God liveth we are your children,” said Ruth and Rose, solemnly, while hushed sobs were heard all over the room.

“Then Lord now lettest Thou Thy servants depart in peace,” he cried, in a shrill tone, “oh! my children—my children, what do my old eyes see?”

“Father, you will forgive me all my sin against you?” cried Rose, passionately, with pleading eyes and clasped hands.

“I do,” he answered, holding out his trembling arms, and the stricken woman fell upon his aged bosom.

“You forgive me for deceiving you?”

“I do, my child.”

“For deserting you?”

“All—all is forgiven,” and a sweet smile lighted up his withered features. “Dear Rose, sweet Ruth, my two darlings—all my dear children, bless you—bless you.”

He closed his eyes; his head sank back, and the wan, pallid look came again. Rose gently laid his head against her bosom—Ruth tenderly placed an arm over his shoulder, and thus between them, with sons and daughters gathered about, he seemed to sleep. Sometimes he would open his eyes, smile, and whisper, “mother;” sometimes he would raise his trembling hands, and clasp them in a kind of transport. But gradually he grew more deathly quiet—his head fell forward—his arms dropped, and he slept, never to wake in this world again.

CHAPTER XVI.

In a splendid mansion in the suburbs of Philadelphia, the twins lived together, after they had seen the mortal remains of their old father laid in the village church-yard. The plain slab bearing the name of Rose had been raised from its mossy foundation, and it stood quietly in the shop of the marble-worker, who had lately come

to the rural town. Ruth and Rose had settled a snug little sum on each of the family, and taken with them Rose, their youngest niece, to be educated in America. It was this pretty girl who came flying in the beautiful room where the sisters were sitting together, one October afternoon, exclaiming, "Oh! see what I have found."

And holding a manuscript paper in her hand, she laughingly advanced.

"What is it?" asked Mrs. Le Dunlap, looking up, "some foolishness of mine, I suppose."

"It's a poem, with the queerest name," she added, and then read, "TO AN OLD HEARTH-BRUSH;" "well, of all the subjects—when did you write it, aunty?"

"I remember," said Mrs. Le Dunlap, musingly, "it was at an old house, a deserted, haunted house in my native town. I was told the story of its inmates, how a beautiful daughter died from the effects of disappointed love—and they say she walks the old chamber yet."

"Read it, my love," said Rose.

"It's not worth the reading," replied Ruth, "but if it will please you—read Rose," and the young girl continued in a soft, well modulated voice,

TO AN OLD HEARTH-BRUSH.

Worn out, thrown by, old brush—no more
The edges of the tidy floor
Will know thy hurried, noiseless touch;
And the broad hearth—though needing much
Thy care—no red flame may illumine:
The hand that used thee in the tomb
Lies mouldering now, and this quaint home
Is tenantless; the bats may come
Sometime through casements black and old,
Where once the sun in liquid gold
Spread o'er the pane; and crickets sing;
But no sweet voice the time will ring
In silvery changes to their song.

Old brush, it seemeth not so long
Since forms of beauty glided here;
This parlor wainscot broken, drear,
Is choice with memories, that decay
Can never mould.

Yon carriage way,
How oft the prancing chargers bore
Gay hearts to this same shattered door.
The grapery! through windows dark
With dust, I look, and fain would hark
To list that low voice, clear and soft,
That from the trellis issued oft.

Alas! the very birds forbear
To rear their little nestlings there,
So sad the place; the garden 'yond
Wears not a flower; the glassy pond,
Shrunken and black, now sullen lies,
Reflecting tree, nor shrub, nor skies;

Like souls, once impress bore of Heaven,
Now to the vain earth wholly given.

In this same room of olden charms,
A babe was placed within my arms;
And on these boards so loosely laid,
A little fair-haired infant played;
Then a young child with holy face
Bending o'er pictured page, would trace
Some story of affection through,
While tears o'erdimmed her eyes of blue
A maiden grown I see her yet,
White fingers 'mid her curls of jet
The wind her tresses lifting now,
How pure and wide the ethereal brow!
Behold! a wounded bird she finds;
His little wing how gently binds;
Oh! tears ye blind my vision—stay—
Oh! memory bear her not away;
Nor tell me where the willows wave,
In forest depth they made her grave.
Her hand, old brush, hath hallowed there:
When the great fire of birchen tree
Roared up the chimney, throwing wide
On objects all its crimson tide
Of light, till ringlets sparkling rolled
O'er ruby cheeks in waves of gold,
Till the dark eyes of child and dame
Were brighter than the spiry flame,
Sometimes with crack and gleaming light,
A shower of stars came dancing bright
In fountain curve, and witch-like leapt
Just where the hearth was newly swept.
Then, with quick bound and laugh of glee,
Her fairy hand would circle thee;
And the black flakes, their beams all dead,
Back to their kindred ashes fled.

The grief comes brimming to my eyes;
How desolate the old hearth lies!
How bleak and chill the winds, that roam
At pleasure through this ruined home!
And then old relic—tattered, torn,
Thy very stump to baldness worn,
Thou hast a voice though thou art dumb,
And power to bid old memories come:
I'll cherish thee—so thou shalt bring
Soft eyes that smile—sweet tones that sing;
And ever henceforth shalt thou be
A dear memento unto me.

"A lady, ma'am," said the servant, respectfully standing at the door.

"Has she sent in her card?" asked Mrs. Le Dunlap.

"No, ma'am," replied the man, with a grin, "I never see her before, ma'am."

"Ask her in, Jacob." But before Jacob could turn round, in came a round dumpling of a figure, with a fat baby in her arms, and hurried up to the sisters, with a face so broad with good-nature that it laughed all over.

"Oh!—I see—it's Sally Possitt—Sally, how do you do?"

"No, Mrs. Jo Dumbley, if you please—I've been married to Jo more'n five year, and this is our last baby. Why, you don't say you've got a sister! How like, too."

"I'm sure I'm glad to see you, Mrs. Dumbley;" then turning to her sister, she added, "this is the good woman who was so kind to that poor sailor's widow—and is your mother well, Sally?"

"Yes, please the Lord, ma's well, and like to be; and so is pa—only you know he *will* drink."

"You saw the advertisement, I suppose?"

"The advertisement," repeated Sally, blankly.

"Yes, didn't you know we had advertised for you?"

"Laws, no," cried Sally, her cheeks blanching, she evidently associating advertisement and crime together—"laws, no! I ain't done nothing. I only heerd you was here—so, ses I, I'll take baby and go and see if I can hear something about that dear Miss Marie, for you know I hain't seen her since the day afore we was married. You see we moved to York state, and then to Bostin: and my poor man's been unfortunate like, and I've had to do jest what that poor *Miss* Trevor did—take in slop-work—and it *was* the sloppiest work too."

"I'm sorry," said Mrs. Le Dunlap, compassionately, "but I advertised for you yesterday and to-day, because Miss Marie has sent you her love and some money."

"Some money—for me?" cried the little woman, starting out of her chair in amazement, "jest now, too, when the matter of ten dollars or so would set us all right. The Lord be thanked."

"It's more than ten dollars too," said Mrs. Le

Dunlap, the tears starting, "it's a check for a hundred pounds."

"A hundred pounds," repeated Sally, bewildered.

"Yes, five hundred dollars; quite a snug little sum."

"Oh! ma'am," cried Sally, falling on her knees, while the baby's head went where its feet ought to be, "I can't hardly believe it, it's too good—and poor Jo crying this morning, thinking how sick he was and nothing to do; and me almost worn out—in my spirits, I mean—for I've had to keep him up, and the children up, and myself up—yes, up all night and all day sometimes—and now I've got this good news, it's almost turned me wild with joy, indeed it has," and the good creature wiped her eyes and sobbed afresh.

It was sometime before she became sufficiently composed to hear all the news about Lady Aimee, and her amazement it is impossible to portray.

"Then she is a grand lady, and I shall never dare to go see her?"

"She is one whom station can never exalt so far as to make her forget the poor, especially those who were friends to her when she was friendless; you see she has remembered you."

"Yes, God bless her," said Sally, "is she married yet?"

"Yes, and before the week close it, should our heavenly Father permit, she will be here with her husband and parents."

"Oh! I hope she will be happy all the days of her life," cried Sally, lifting her tearful eyes to heaven—"surely, surely, I pray God to bless her with every good thing, and make her whole life a blessing."

"Amen," said the twin sisters, solemnly.

A CURE FOR ENNUI.

BY MARY L. MEANY.

"Oh, dear! I am so tired!" said Esther Moreland, as after vainly trying to amuse herself with her music, flowers and books, she leaned back wearily in an arm-chair with a heavy sigh, "tired to death doing nothing!" she added, with a faint effort to smile, as she met the inquiring glance of an old friend of her mother's, familiarly called aunt Dora, who had come to spend a few days with them.

"Doing nothing!" repeated the old lady, with an emphasis. "That, in truth, is the most wearisome of all employments; but I never thought my young friend, Esther Moreland, likely to suffer weariness from such a cause. You did not look so woe-begone awhile ago, when I saw you busied with some domestic affairs."

"My share of the household duties is done for to-day," replied Esther, "and I am glad that it is, for I have no heart for anything."

"Do you often have these feelings?"

"Yes, indeed, I frequently feel as I do just now, that the least exertion of body or mind is a grievous trial; and after all," she added, petulantly, "I believe there is no greater trial than depression of spirits."

Aunt Dora smiled curiously on the discontented girl. "Scarcely seventeen, and yet talking of low spirits! Why, child, what will you do when you shall have passed as many years in the world as I have?"

"I don't know, I am sure, unless you give me your recipe for good spirits and contentment. You must have an infallible one, for you never seem to suffer from ennui, whether at home or abroad."

"I have a very good one—a change from amusement to occupation, and vice versa, as either becomes fatiguing or irksome."

"But just now all occupation and amusement are alike to me. I have no care for anything, and know not how to employ myself, unless by annoying my kind friend by my selfish complaints, which I am thoughtlessly doing."

"Have no fear on that head, my dear girl," said aunt Dora. "I have an idea of what your present feelings are, and am not annoyed by their utterance. Let me see if I can help you. You have various methods of spending your spare time?"

"But I cannot interest myself in any. Perhaps

if there was a necessity for applying myself to any object in particular I could by great effort do so; but there is not. Our fall sewing is over, and I have tried the different kinds of fancy work which I have on hand for odd minutes, but I cannot give proper attention to any of them."

"Well, there is one resource, at least, which you have not tried—this is a fine morning, suppose you try a long walk in the cool, autumn air! That will surely have an enlivening effect."

"Not when I have no other company than my own dull thoughts."

"How would you like me for company? Perhaps we might meet with something novel or interesting."

"Certainly, if you desire to take a walk, aunt Dora, I will accompany you with pleasure; but if you are only going for my sake——"

"For your sake, and for my own also, my dear," interrupted the good-natured old lady. "A walk will do both of us good; so let us get ready at once."

They were soon in the street, aunt Dora chatting pleasantly as they went along, and taking advantage of every opportunity to enliven her listless companion; with little success, however, for she perceived that Esther's transient gleams of animation were only the result of a polite attention to her. After a time aunt Dora prepared to return.

"But, perhaps," she added, "you will have no objection to call upon a sick person in this neighborhood with me. I ought to go to see her. Will you come?"

Esther assented; and turning down the next street, aunt Dora, without ceremony entered a small house, and preceding her companion up the stairs, her gentle rap gained them admission to a room occupied by a sickly-looking woman and two little girls. The furniture of the room, as Esther observed at a glance, was scant and plain, but everything was tidy and clean, and a few plants in the window gave an air of taste and cheerfulness to the apartment. The woman, who with the elder child had been busily sewing beside the window, rose on their entrance, a faint smile of pleasure lighting up her wan features as she replied to aunt Dora's friendly and cheerful-toned greetings.

"Now, Mrs. Williams, I fear I shall have to

begin to scold," said aunt Dora, after they had sat down, "didn't you promise me that until you gain some strength after your long spell of sickness, you would not undertake any sewing?"

"I did, indeed, dear madam, and I have kept my promise," was the reply, with that same touching smile. "I am now a great deal better, almost as well as ever, thanks to your kindness, which I can never cease to remember with gratitude."

"We will not talk of that, for I did nothing," rejoined aunt Dora. "You are in fact looking better than I had expected to find you, but I am afraid you are trying your strength too soon. I wish you would rest for a few days."

"I do take rest every now and then, but this work is for a lady who has been giving me most of her fine sewing for sometime past, and as she is going travelling I should be sorry to disappoint her, so I thought by working a little occasionally, this week, I would be more sure of having all done by the specified time."

Esther Moreland had been talking with the children during this conversation, but she heard enough to understand its import, and her kind feelings becoming at once interested in the uncomplaining invalid, and the two quiet, delicate-looking children, she offered to take some of the sewing home with her, as she could easily devote a few hours to it, and thus relieve Mrs. Williams of a part of a task, which, to one so feeble, must be insupportably tedious. Aunt Dora warmly approved the offer, which Mrs. Williams would have declined; and selecting such parts of the work as she judged most tedious of execution, Esther promised to return the next day, and they took leave of the grateful little family. On their way home aunt Dora gratified Esther's curiosity by such particulars as she was able to give.

Mrs. Williams was a widow, and by her skill in fine needlework supported herself and her two little girls. The latter belonged to aunt Dora's class in Sunday school, and had become favorites with her on account of their docility and amiable deportment. Having missed them from school on two Sundays, she had inquired their place of residence, and called to ascertain the cause of their unwonted absence. She found the mother confined to her bed through the debility occasioned by a severe cold, from which she had been suffering for several months; and this, together with the want, as she conjectured, of suitable clothing, had prevented the children's attendance at school. Aunt Dora belonged to a benevolent society, but she felt that this was not a case to bring under its notice, as the widow had evidently suffered many privations in secret, rather

than apply for aid. She had, therefore, with as much delicacy as possible provided various little comforts of which she judged them to be in need.

"And the children," said Esther, "have you yet supplied them with the things they need?"

"No, I deferred that as their mother was too sick for them to attend Sunday school, even had they been provided with suitable apparel. Next week I will see about them."

"Suffer me to see about them, will you not, aunt Dora? It would be so much pleasure to me to provide them with some nice clothes."

"Then you shall have the pleasure, by all means, if your mother will sanction your intention," replied aunt Dora, delighted at her young friend's prompt benevolence.

On reaching home, Esther related what had passed to her mother; and receiving her ready approval of her benevolent purposes, she set about her self-imposed task without a thought of "ennui;" and by the afternoon of the following day it was accomplished in her own neat style. On returning it to Mrs. Williams she had a long conversation with her and the little girls, which increased the interest she had already taken in them, while they began to look upon her in the light of a friend; so that when she invited Anna, the elder one, to take a walk with her, the child with pleased alacrity hastened to get ready. Her attire, to be sure, was ill-suited to the season, but this was of little consequence as the afternoon was mild, and Esther only intended to take her a short distance. The principal object, indeed, was to ascertain how she could make her intended gifts most acceptable, and this was easily done; a few adroit questions eliciting from the confiding child that her mother had been intending to get brown merino dresses and cloaks for them, but being so long sick and unable to earn enough for the purpose, they had to go without them.

"Mother was so sorry, and we were, too; but she says maybe she can get them for us next fall;" and the mournful look which the child's face had worn while speaking of the great disappointment, was replaced by a smile of joyful anticipation. Esther smiled absently on the little face artlessly upturned, but she spoke not, for she was calculating the possible cost of the articles specified, and others needful to correspond with them, and she was thinking that her entire sum of "pocket-money" would scarcely suffice, leaving nothing for the purchase of a few trifles she had intended to buy for herself. The desire, however, to satisfy the long-cherished anticipations of the children, and to please the long-suffering, toiling parent, conquered the

pleadings of self, and on reaching the store where her principal purchase was to be made, she selected the brown merino. Anna's eyes sparkled with joy on being informed that it was intended for her and her little sister, and Esther was more than compensated for her trifling act of self-denial, by witnessing the innocent delight she had caused to one who seldom felt the keen, lively pleasure of early childhood. She took the child home with her that her dress might be cut out and begun at once, and on dismissing her desired her to come the next day, and bring her sister if their mother could spare them both.

Aunt Dora smiled kindly on the young girl who, far from regretting the sacrifice she had made of the coveted ornaments she had been promising herself, was now busily employed with the merino, which Mrs. Moreland remarked was of an excellent quality, and suggested that the dresses should be made with large capes, which would be nice for spring wear, and afterward help to alter the dresses which would last two or three winters.

"Little Anna's tongue is busy enough to-night, I warrant!" said aunt Dora, as after tea they all three began to work on the new dress.

"At first I intended to keep the matter a secret from Mrs. Williams," said Esther, "and was going to caution Anna very seriously to say nothing of the new clothes; but then I thought it would be unkind to deprive her of a pleasant anticipation merely to give her an agreeable surprise."

"So it would," replied aunt Dora. "But, Esther, what has become of your ennui?" she added, archly, "I was afraid it would return to-day, but I have seen no indications of it."

"Nor have I felt any," rejoined the young girl, with a bright smile; "thanks to your invaluable recipe, which has proved so efficacious in this instance that I must have recourse to it on similar occasions in future. Do you think it will fail when the novelty is worn off, aunt Dora, or is it a sure and never-failing remedy?"

"In most cases, my dear, I hold that cheerful, well-endured industry will prove the most effectual preventive of low spirits; and I believe that young ladies, in particular, would often be the gainers by engaging in some active work of benevolence, such as that which at present affords you a pleasing occupation. To contribute to some charitable society or institution satisfies the majority of even what are considered really benevolent people; but how many like yourself have a little spare time as well as money to devote to kind deeds, and by a little generous exertion, and, if need be self-denial on their part, how much good might be effected."

"I have never thought seriously on the subject," replied Esther, "but now that you have directed my attention to it, I hope I shall not be found so remiss in future, especially as I have myself gained so much already by the pleasure I feel in this little work, so that my benevolence, you see, is only a new phase of selfishness."

Mrs. Moreland and aunt Dora smiled, for they knew how little inclined was the warm-hearted Esther to selfishness, and that she needed no such incentive to fulfil the resolution which was thenceforward diligently put in practice; and while many blessed her for her kind deeds, she always maintained that she was the person benefited in being cured of ennui.

ESQUIRE FAXON AND HIS DEACONS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SUSY L——'S DIARY."

CHAPTER I.

THE FAXONS had been three months in Haverhill at the time our story opens. There were four of them, father, mother, daughter, and "a young scapegrace of a son;" (for this is what aunt Molly Kimble called him.) The father, until lately, had been a clergyman. He went into the ministry when he was very young; only twenty-two; "before he was old enough to know his own mind," he was accustomed to say, "so he was governed by the mind of his pious old father." And he was accustomed to add, "As bad luck would have it, I began life under the shadow of another's will, and I have never come out of it. There hasn't been an hour since, when I've been awake, that I haven't been turning my head one way and another, before I stirred, to see what the deacons, or the people would say to it. I don't see why I have had to do it; I who hate to be meddled with worse than I hate poison; worse than any other man on earth can."

Mr. Faxon could never keep a parish. And by-and-bye he left off trying; turning himself unreservedly to a half-bitter, half-jolly sarcasm against "the people," and against "the ministry." Against the ministry, as a vocation, he meant. "He had no faith in it," he said, "not the least: that was, in its efficiency to alter people and make them better. For people," he added—alas! poor Squire Fink!—"were what they were made up in their brains to be, from beginning to end. More than half of them were like the foolish herd of swine going headlong into the sea. For his part, he was going to let them go." He did, therefore; and went to studying the law. He was just through with it when he came to Haverhill; a large, grand-looking man; bringing along his "crack team"—the squire's own term; and we also imitate him, in setting his team foremost, before wife and children; his "little flutter-budget of a wife;" (so aunt Molly called her) his gay-headed daughter of twenty, and his son of eighteen; who, as aunt Molly said, was "allers upon the fly, scurrying east, west, north and south, with that pocky gun of his, that was *forever* clapping off its noise close to a body's ears. For her part, she didn't go anywhere that she wasn't, in one spot or another,

scaret half to death with it." And, *apropos*, when lively Mary Harnden heard her telling this to Mrs. Harnden, in the midst of her energetic snuff-takings, she tucked her head away a little to hide the smiles that would keep breaking up over her face, much as she disliked doing anything to make aunt Molly cross, or to trouble any one; for, the day before, when she was in one of the chambers, she saw, first, John Faxon running in a skulking way, with his gun in his hand and his game-bag on his hip. She saw him throw himself over Dr. Frazer's garden fence, and Mr. Hurd's stone wall, to be near the road just behind aunt Molly, who was plodding with her head down. She saw John discharge his piece at the body of an elm; saw aunt Molly jump about; saw John, as if he didn't know there was an aunt Molly, go hurrying, stooping, hunting in the grass at the foot of the elm, as if for his game.

Squire Faxon bought Judge Denin's house and furniture when he came to Haverhill. The judge and his wife were going to board at the Coffee House.

It was, on the whole, the most substantial, the best-looking house in the village. It was a finer house than the boasted homestead of the Warrens, a little out of the village, on the north. But the Warrens had the finest yard, garden and green-house. When the squire saw this, he proceeded diligently to have his all torn up; taking precautions everywhere, in the first place, to have everything different from the Warrens; and, in the second place, to have everything handsomer. He would have no great marble vases with tiny verbenas in them. Or, if he had them anywhere, it should be in the background, in modest, out-of-the-way places. The Warrens had theirs near the front pillars of their portico. The squire placed statues there, of Pan and Flora. He bought them very cheap, by the way, at an auction of second-hand vases in Boston. He talked roundly, though, with one or two, to set the matter going in the village, of their beauty and value, touching his finger-tips here and there, as he lamented the little mutilations they had got by the way, in coming. He established two jets, moreover; small ones, they were; but they had a cool, pleasant sound in a summer

evening to many and many a weary, heated passenger-by; so that to these, far more than to their legitimate owner, who had, we fear, little else beside pride and vanity in them, the little fountains were a beautiful and a dear possession.

Aunt Molly called the squire "a horse-jockey." And nobody dissented, saying, "Ah, don't, aunt Molly, be so severe!" as sometimes they did when they found her really unjust. For he certainly did make grand flourishes, "especially for one who has been a clergyman so lately," many said, curvetting with his team, up, down and across the wide street, with the lash far-stretching, and his elbows gracefully bent, gracefully lifted.

CHAPTER II.

NOBODY at Haverhill filled Esquire Faxon's head like the Warrens. He hardly sat at a meal, that he hadn't something to say before he was through, of "the Warrens;" and especially of "the old gentleman," Deacon Warren. He hardly sat down at night to read his politics, that he did not soon let the paper hang on his hands, in an abstraction from which he looked up, sometime along, to say something about what the Warrens had been doing, or were going soon to do; or about how many houses the old gentleman had there in the village, how many thousands he had in and about the old homestead, and how many in the People's Bank; or about the young man's salary as superintendent of the Haverhill and Boston Railroad, and about how he was all the child the old people had; so that, one day, he'd be rich as Croesus. Not that the squire had any natural, spontaneous love or care for money. He had not. Money had been coming to him whenever he had pressing need of it, all his life-time, sometimes in legacies, sometimes in gifts, sometimes in loans, so-called; but they had all the essential attributes of gifts, as all who were concerned knew.

These came, both the gifts and the loans, chiefly from his rich father and father-in-law. But he had spent it, as if it were no more in his eyes than water, caring little where it went, or how it went, until a supply was nearly out. Then he began to look about him for those who had money, and to calculate his chances of getting hold of a little. Lately he had spent so much, that both father and father-in-law had sober faces, as if they were questioning within themselves, where and when it would all end. The squire's keen eye did not fail to see this; and seeing it, thinking about it on his way home and after he reached home, made him settle down upon the Warrens and their substance;

made him think within himself and hint it to his wife, that "if young Warren could, by any sort of tact and cunning, be entangled with Cad, so as to marry her, then!" And he finished by setting his large, fair hands out before him in his way, and rubbing them together.

As for little Mrs. Faxon, she wished as strenuously that some such thing as that might turn up for Cad. She was sure she was tired of this going to the parents for so much; this being so dependant. For her part, as true as she lived, she would rather be very poor; that was, she would rather live in no style at all than to be so dependant. She wouldn't though; and so her husband told her. He told her it was only her way of repining; that, in reality, she was asking every day of her life for something new for herself, or some of them, or for the house, when she, as well as he, knew that these things could come only through fresh drafts upon his father. For his profession as yet, she knew, didn't pay his office rent.

But, wheugh! where was Cad? Why didn't breakfast come in? It came in presently. Cad came in at the same time; Cad and Rinktum. Cad had not been up long; long enough though to have had "a famous time" with the dog, out in the paths.

Young Warren had gone out of town, the squire said, during breakfast, without looking up. They had some company up to the deacon's, he added. He should think there were a half dozen sitting in the portico and on the steps, when he rode by last evening. And, within a few days, he had seen a tall, finely dressed man out round the village with the deacon. He saw Colonel Barker speaking to him as if he knew him familiarly. The colonel came from them to him; but he asked no questions of him.

"Mind ye," said he, "I never ask questions about the Warrens." His muscular arms were lying on the table; his muscular hands were together breaking a roll. "For, if the Warrens are high, so I am. I never forget that a minute. I never will. They are better worth knowing than anybody else here at Haverhill. I haven't a doubt of that. I want to know them, when I can, in just the right way. But when Colonel Barker said to me, 'You must know the Warrens, some way; I wish I could ever find a chance to introduce you.' I bowed in *Domboy's* way, and said sentimentally, 'Oh, any time, colonel! There's not the least hurry.'"

"But the deacon, pal you hate deacons so!" said Cad, looking up like a fresh rose. "They've been such a bother to you all your days!"

"Not because they were deacons, though,

chit," replied he, laughing in a low, hearty way at the face Cad put upon the deacons. "I never hated them simply for this. But because they took it upon themselves to *manage* me. No wild creature, with the most destructive propensities, was ever curbed, goaded, hedged about as I've been by some of my deacons. I've had deacons who were reasonable men; who were excellent men. You know I have, wife. Such as Deacon Gilman and Deacon Ladd. But I've had more who were mere men of iron, grim as skeletons, such as Deacons Baker, Ordway and Clapp. Those men I hate!—in spite of the gospel and everything. I hated them the very minute I was standing in the pulpit, saying to my people, 'Love one another.'"

"Ah! why, pa!" said Cad, half in laughter, half in consternation.

"A fact! and your mother knows it. I believed in love," added he, proceeding to butter the roll he had until now been holding in his hands just as he broke it, "I believed in it for a long time. I always did at times and do now. But they almost killed me!" An expression of bitterest pain crossed his features as he spoke; and the bread that was half way to his mouth he laid down again in his plate, adding, "Well, of course I hated myself for hating them, for the contradictions in—in my entire life. My whole life was made one gigantic lie; was bruised, battered and torn down by the warfare going on between my conscience and the circumstance that kept me in its almost constant violation; and between my own propensities, (innocent, good enough propensities these were, if my people, and especially my deacons, had ever given the dust time to settle fairly, so that I could see how to regulate them) my own will and the will of those thick-skulled old fellows, who could no more understand one of my temperament, or know what to say to me, or how to say it, than an Egyptian mummy can in its casing."

"No! that is what I always said!" began his little wife, in her delicate little morning cap and pretty morning gown. Neither, alas! did she understand him. Neither had she, in all his "warfare;" so that she had been no help and comforter to him, but a quickener of whatever in him was over-fond of the approbation of men, impetuous, and in need of being put utterly aside, or soothed to rest. She had never once, in all he had erred and suffered, said to him, "We'll think of God then. We'll do right. In His holy sight we'll *deserve* to be loved by our people, by everybody; and farther than this, we will not have a thought or a care. If we find at any time that we do care, that we look one way

and another, caring more for what Deacon Clapp, or any of our people say and think of us, than for what God sees in our hearts, we'll take this for a sign that we have *need* of His discipline." When the suffering was at its sorest, she had never once said, "We'll take it in meek patience, dearest; and it shall quickly do its office of 'the schoolmaster bringing us to Christ;' quickly pass on, leaving us in a new and more grateful serenity." On the contrary she had said, as if she were only a child, "I wouldn't bear it! We don't do a thing that they don't watch and criticize; and I think it's hateful! If I were a man I'm sure I wouldn't stay here and bear it."

So he strove to reconcile himself neither to the spirit of Christ, nor to the waning love of his people. He only offended the more recklessly, and looked up another parish.

CHAPTER III.

"I'm out of it now!" said the squire, with a breath deep and long-drawn, on the morning of which we have already spoken. "You are out of it, little chit," setting the tips of his fingers under his daughter's chin. "And I'm thinking that you too feel as if shackles were off."

"Yes!" interposed Mrs. Faxon. "For, from a mere child, she's had to be a woman, because she was 'the minister's daughter!' H'm!"

"I think you made up for it though," said the squire, speaking to Cad, "while you were at grandfather Partridge's."

The family, by the way, had had their home with Mrs. Faxon's parents, at the retired and pleasant old homestead, while the squire was away pursuing his new studies.

"Ha! I did have a good time," laughed Cad. "Rinktum and I." He was a noble, great fellow, black and shaggy as a Russian bear. He was lying at Cad's side, his eyes half-shut, his nose pillowed in his soft paws. He looked up quickly on hearing his name spoken, and Cad gave him the rich bit she had been making ready for her own mouth. "There wasn't a big rock anywhere that we didn't climb it; or a fence, or stone wall; was there, Rinktum? And don't you think, pa! I even made old Fan—twenty years old, as much as that—I made her leap a three-boards fence. What do you think of that?"

"Poh! the boards were all down flat though, Mr. Faxon," said Mrs. Faxon, seeing how his eyes were beginning to dilate. And thereupon the squire narrowed his eyes again, poised his spoon on the brim of his huge coffee-cup, telling Cad that *she* was "a mischievous lump."

"But there was fun in it," persisted Cad. "You can't deny that, ma!"

"No, I can't. I guess you would have laughed, Mr. Faxon, if you had seen them. Cad and old Fan, I mean. The boards—they were the bars of the field across the road from the house, you know. Well, they were lying as flat as Mrs. Deacon Clapp's pancakes, all together. It was nothing to go over them; but Cad and Fan made such a piece of work out of it! They would go away back as if to have the advantage of quite a run to the leap; then they'd come ambling and prancing back, then leap; and then Cad would pat Fan's neck and the side of her head, as if she had been doing wonders. Old Mrs. Ralfe was there visiting with her tremendous great calico work-bag. Don't you remember, Cad?"

Cad "rather thought" she did remember.

"Do you remember what she said, when at last you came up to the door where we were?" Mrs. Faxon asked.

"She said, '*she never see er minister's darter cut up like that afore,*'" replied Cad, coloring. "I made her a low, old-fashioned courtesy, telling her I wasn't a minister's daughter, I thanked her, but an independent lawyer's. For I was mad, you see, pa. It put the shackles all back to my wrists and ankles; and stifled my breath and my speech. I can't bear any more of that; I've had so much of it!"

The squire said he understood very well how she felt; bade her not mind old Mrs. Ralfe, nor anything that was past; but to take her comfort in the present—as he meant to.

Cad, who hardly seemed to have heard what her father remarked, came out of a little musing fit to say, "If I ever get married, and if it is to a man who attempts even so delicately to be my master, I am thinking that he will have his hands full."

Her father came out of the abstraction into which he had been thrown, in thinking that, after all, he didn't see as he was a happy man, even if he was out of the ministry, and in possession of the best house in Haverhill, and said that "he presumed so." Next he asked why John was not there taking his breakfast with them; what he was in bed for at that time of day; eight o'clock; half-past eight; looking up at the mantle-clock.

Why, he was out a little late the night before, Mrs. Faxon said. He had never had a chance to be out any before, she said, they had always been obliged to be so strict with him, "because he was the minister's son. And you know," added she, "we always made him get up so early at Malton, Deacon Clapp's folks said so much

about its being our duty to make him an example for their boys in early rising! As true as I live," she continued, gathering the knives and forks, "I don't believe the deacon did anything, or thought of anything one morning in twenty, but looking over our way to see if John was out of bed. John had such a time of it; for he is naturally a sleepy boy in the morning. He takes it from me. Now he can take his comfort, I think we ought to let him. Awhile, at any rate."

Her father now rose to go, and her mother went to the kitchen. Cad threw herself on the piano-stool, and while her fingers abstractedly run over the keys, she thought how imperious her father was toward her mother. She knew he was not more so than other men, or, at least, other strong-willed men like her father, were to their wives; but she felt that it was what she could never bear. For if she ever married, and if her husband had a strong, mighty will, so would she, his wife and equal, have a strong, mighty will; that should *never* meddle with his chosen ways; she would hold it back conscientiously from such an unlawful proceeding as that; but that should never, could never, in its very condition of strength and impetuosity, bear from him *commands* such as her father every day gave with high head, with indifferent looks and tones, as if her mother were his servant. Cad was no reasoner. As she had been incidentally trained to do by her parents' habit, she took hold of all action in its simple aspect before her, estimating it without a single reference to the few or many collateral inducements, or necessities which we call circumstances. If she had been a reasoner, she would have known that, in the first place, her parents were not well-matched. They knew it; that is, the parents did. But in the light, unreflective way in which they held whatever knowledge they possessed, of whatever matters; not once submitting it to Reason's good crucible, to see it come out therefrom in the form of pure, available Wisdom. So the squire still had his heart-sore reveries of the splendid girl, Jamelia Story, (now the splendid woman, Mrs. Dr. Harding, of Newburyport,) whom he would fain have married, only that his rigid old father would not hear of anything but his marrying Miss Partridge, since "her family was so substantial;" that was since her two brothers and her two, or three uncles and cousins in the ministry at home and abroad, would be such strengtheners and supporters of his hands.

Mrs. Faxon thought of dear, poor Henry Eave, now Lieutenant Colonel Eave, of the Mexican army. She often thought of him while she was bending low over her sewing; settling it anew in

her convictions that he had remained single to this late day, that he had joined the army out of the old love of her that still lingered in his heart.

Cad, if she had been a reasoner, or a fresh, impulsive thinker, would have seen that it was a difficult thing for one like her father to do—to feel genuine respect and esteem for one like her mother. She would, albeit, have seen beyond this the grateful truth, that, notwithstanding all the opposing circumstances of earlier loves, uncongeniality, and intellectual disposition. Mrs. Faxon still had her chance to sit quietly, improving herself in the Christian graces of gentleness, of long-suffering, of love in the midst of the long-suffering; that Esquire Faxon had his chance of nobly redeeming himself from the low passions of vanity and selfishness, of turning himself to a serene inward life; of helping to bring his wife to this kind of life, by his powerful will rightly attuned to dignity and gentle kindness toward her.

But poor, misdirected Cad could see nothing at all of this, while she sat there touching her keys at intervals. She finished, therefore, by thinking that their way was rather dark before them; by saying, "Heigh-ho," and then sauntering away to see what her mother was doing.

CHAPTER IV.

ESQUIRE FAXON brought his brother home to dinner, the brother, that, beyond any other mortal, he loved and looked up to out of a sincere appreciation of his exalted mind and character. The brother was a delicate, little man, with penetrating black eyes, with a very pleasant, but at the same time, a very firm mouth, with quick, vivacious manners, strongly indicative of the quick, vivacious character he indubitably possessed. He was missionary to the farthest, most benighted West. He had been appointed there at his own request, not long after his ordination, ten years ago. This was his second visit east.

"Tell me," said the squire, speaking earnestly, while they were sitting after dinner, "what made you go there? for I remember how people courted you and wanted you here."

"Yes, I remember it. I went because in those days, pray, struggle, strive as I would, I found myself constantly in danger of becoming light-headed with the appreciation I got on all hands. The brethren of the ministry praised me, you remember, and predicted high things of me. The people loved me and came round me in little packs, or great, whenever I preached. And I

liked it. Thinking of it on my way home, and after my head was on the pillow, I did not think of Him who was doing all for me, giving me my life, my talent of moving others, everything. I wept many tears on account of the miserable servitude to poor, dependant man. But I couldn't pick out the huge faculty of approbateness up here. I wouldn't stay and let it lead me about in the seductive paths, so I took a cross so heavy that I could trust to its restraining my feet, and keeping me bowed down before the only true Master."

"That is strange!" said the squire, speaking thoughtfully. "You ran voluntarily away from what I have all my life-time been trying hardest to get. I would have given that finger to be a thoroughly popular preacher."

"You would have given it for something poorer than the poorest song!" said his brother, speaking very seriously. "That is, I mean, if you had set your heart on the popularity as you naturally would, desiring it so much."

"Yes, I suppose I should," sighed the squire. "I did, at Springfield. I was really popular awhile there, you know, wife," turning to Mrs. Faxon—"but *you* don't, chit," his eyes happening to light on Cad's that were so large and bright just then. "You were a little thing with silver hair then. I used to call you 'tow-head,' I remember. Well," he added, his smile quickly fading, "I rode on the wings of flattery and favor awhile; and I must own that my head, at least, was a little light with it. It didn't last long though. It wasn't—why, in less than a year, some who had been my best friends at first, were hardest and stiffest against me. I supposed I deserved it from them though, after letting my vanity be so tickled with their favor."

"You deserved it from Providence, my brother. In other words, softer a little, but expressive of the same thing in the mind of the philosophical Christian, you *needed* it. It came legitimately out of God's perfect law of evolution; came as effect, as penalty; as an incentive—if used aright—to a close walk with God; not with men. Like the physical pain we feel and complain about, its office is a most necessary one—to indicate a disease; its seat and its nature. The pain itself is really beneficent. But it is a pity to have the disease, is it not?"

He ended with a smile. They smiled all round the table. Cad felt as if a little light came in upon her life; as if life might after all be beautiful to one who knew how to make it so. John thought that his uncle Henry was a confounded good-natured man, and wondered whether he

would think anything of his gun, and of his dexterity at the target.

Mrs. Faxon, poor woman! wished that Henry could teach her, in so long a time, how to be as happy as he was. She wouldn't value sitting hours and hours to be told the way.

Esquire Faxon, always in the dark about himself—especially after the prodigiously hearty dinners he was accustomed to eat—thought that, but for the deacons and the people who had wronged and embittered him, he might, per-

haps, have been half as wise and happy as Henry, long before this time. Some of Henry's words made him feel as though he might, any way, have been happy. Something that Henry said about one's mastering one's own life and all its conditions, made him see it, although in a glimmering way, that he all his life-time had been slave instead of master; slave of the circumstances, of all sorts, that had been tossing him.

(TO BE CONCLUDED.)

MY COUSIN HARRY.

BY CARRY STANLEY, AUTHOR OF "ADA LESTER'S SEASON IN NEW YORK."

CHAPTER I.

"AND this, I suppose, is to be my home for the future," thought I, as I leaned forward to view in the twilight the old-fashioned house before which the carriage drew up; and in spite of the buoyant spirits of fifteen, I shrank from that future.

To live forever with two old maids, and their cats, and lap-dogs, and worsted work!—it was too horrible to contemplate, and I mentally resolved to escape from *such* single blessedness as soon as possible.

But the door opened, and I was already in a well lighted hall, warmed at the farther extremity by a huge stove which seemed to be nothing but fiery eyes, as the red coals shone through the isinglass that lined the elaborately cut fancy work of which the upper part was composed. Before the servant had time to close the one door behind me, another had opened, and a kind voice, in the parlor, said,

"This way, dear, do come to the fire and get warm, it's a bitter cold night, and then we'll have tea. This is your aunt Margaret," leading me up to a fine, elderly lady by the fireside, "and I'm your aunt Patty, dear; though we're not much of relatives either, I believe."

"And I'm your cousin Harry, dear," said a mocking voice from a corner, into which I had not had time to peer.

A mellow little laugh from aunt Patty, that seemed to say that the speaker was a privileged person, and a "Harry, don't, you'll frighten the poor child," from aunt Margaret, was all that I knew of cousin Harry at that time, for there was no lamp in the room, and he sat in too obscure a corner for even the dancing, merry light of the hickory fire to illuminate.

How cozy and comfortable everything looked, after the paper flowers, and wax flowers, and dilapidated annuals of the large, tawdry drawing-room of the boarding-school. The wonderful twisted legs of the old-fashioned furniture seemed to be dancing quiet little jigs, as the firelight flickered on them; a lion's paw was now and then thrust forward in a kind of rough play, grasping a marvellous-looking ball, from some chair, table or escrutoire. The curious, black, old cabinet, in the corner, stood grim and prim,

scarcely deigning to smile as the ruddy firelight played hide and seek over its multitudinous doors and drawers, making one think of lost wills, and secret springs, locks of hair and faded flowers, and all the other romances connected with old cabinets. But the firelight lingered the cheeriest around the table in the centre of the room, with its snowy damask cloth, its old-fashioned glittering silver, led off by the platina tea-urn, with its grim lion's heads, blinking inoffensively at one, as they grasped the huge silver rings which served as handles, and the tiny egg-shell china cups, almost transparent in their delicate beauty.

Orphan and stranger as I was, all this domestic comfort, after three years in a pinched, genteel boarding-school, opened my heart to my unknown relatives.

In the meantime, my bonnet and wraps had been moved by aunt Patty's own plump hands, the bell rung, and lights and tea were being brought in.

Aunt Margaret drew her spectacles down to her eyes and scrutinized me for a moment.

"You are very much like your mother, Isabel," she said at last.

"Jezebel! what a name for a woman," put in master Harry, who now came forward, his saucy face lighted up with irrepressible mischief.

Aunt Margaret wound her yarn up systematically to the last inch, stuck the long needles through the ball, and laid it upon the little work stand beside her. Aunt Patty busied herself with the brightly polished copper kettle, which was brought in over a spirit lamp, bubbling away in its merry, domestic manner; herself, it seemed to me, a kind of human kettle, with her cheery fireside hum and bubble of content; then the servant placed the muffins, as brown as an oak leaf in autumn, and the strangely twisted silver toast-rack on the table, and we took our seats.

"This is poor fare, isn't it, after the sumptuous table you have been accustomed to at boarding-school?" asked Harry, as he handed me a second muffin. "You don't seem to like it."

It was too bad; for now I knew that my mischievous cousin could have enumerated every mouthful I had eaten, and I was nearly starved

yet; but I answered as composedly as possible, "I like it so well that I'm sorry to see you feeding your dog so soon, for I'm not nearly done yet," and I passed my tiny cup to aunt Patty for some more of her fragrant tea.

Aunt Margaret drew her lips over her teeth, which I afterward discovered was about as near as her dignity would permit her to come to a smile, while aunt Patty laughed gleefully, saying, "So, ho, master Impudence, you have got your match, I hope," and the young gentleman dismissed the dog, which was sitting on his haunches, watching, with wagging tail and anxious eyes, every mouthful which Harry took.

When my school-girl appetite was appeased, I had time to look around; and the only modern thing in the room was a portrait which hung over the mantel.

I glanced alternately at it, and at Harry Anstruther. There was the same fair, open brow, beneath the profusion of curls, which, even at the age of twenty-one, retained the golden hue so rare save in childhood; the same laughing, hazle eye, the same well formed mouth, shaded by the down of the first moustache.

Harry at last caught the direction of my glance.

"Yes, it's I," said he, nodding gravely, "but it does not by any means do me justice."

Indeed I more than half agreed with him, coxcomb, as I thought him.

"Now, Miss Jezebel," continued he, "I must give you warning not to fall in love with me. It will be hard work for you, I know, to help it; but I cannot have any more wives on my hands. I'm engaged to six already."

"There is not much danger," I retorted, "as I'm neither a Mormon nor a Turk."

"Whew! how peppery you are. Have a care, or I'll take you to season the batch," was the reply. "Let me see; there's Nelly Hale, she's a beauty, I tell you; as *petite* as a Fenella, a perfectly bewitching little blonde, that dances into your heart without leave or license. I admire blondes," and he looked steadily at me, my brunette complexion growing swarthier, I have no doubt, from my vexation.

"Then there's Clara Hoffman, she's two," counting them on his fingers, "there was never a Roman empress more stately than she, and her figure is rounded like a statue's." Another glance at me, who was all angles and corners.

"And there's Alice Brant. Well, Alice is the very personification of grace; she never moves a hand nor turns her head except just when she should; every muscle is in its proper place."

I had such a superabundance of limbs that I never knew what to do with them.

"Then there's Anne Gray. Ah! *she'd* make a wife! Such sweet, blue eyes, that only live on your own, and such a gentle little heart, that only beats for—well, no matter who. And Elizabeth Taylor, let me see, she makes five. Well, Elizabeth is rather strong-minded. She knows more about the 'ologies' and 'onimies' than any professor in college. But I think you would appreciate Jenny Warren the most. Such pies and puddings as she makes. She'd reach any man's heart through his stomach, I assure you," and master Harry aired the evening paper before the fire, and settled himself down to its contents.

The evening passed quickly to me, in arranging my plan of studies at home, with my aunts, and tired as I was, the good ladies' early bed-hour arrived long before I expected it. Aunt Patty arranged the blocks of her silk patch-work in her basket, and then left the parlor, Harry following her. Presently I heard her voice in the next room,

"Harry, what a troublesome fellow you are. You mix up the silver so that I shall never get it counted."

"Well I won't, aunty," replied Harry, "but what an elfish-looking little thing that girl is."

Aunt Margaret was protecting her geraniums from the cold air of the window, so I had the full benefit of the remarks.

"She is not very handsome now, poor child; but she is very much like her mother was at her age, and she grew to be one of the most beautiful women I ever saw," replied aunt Patty, with as much sorrow as her voice could express, coming through a throat made mellow by most generous living.

"*She'll* never be anything but a fright. She puts me in mind of an imp, aunt Patty."

"Harry, how can you? One, two, three—don't mix the large and small forks, Harry—five, six."

"Why she's got arms like the sails of a wind-mill, and hands like a bird's claws."

"Eleven, twelve large ones—she will fill up and be a fine figure yet."

"Yes, she will *fill up* mighty soon, if she puts down muffins and tea with the locomotive speed she did to-night."

The clinking of the silver was all that I heard for a moment, then master Harry commenced again,

"And such a mouth! Whew! it would take a week to kiss it from one side to the other."

"What nonsense, Harry—James' silver don't look very bright—you men seem to care for nothing but kissing; it is really underbred to

talk so much about it as you do," and I fancied the little lady drawing herself up to her utmost height.

"Now, aunt Patty, you *know* you like to be kissed. Don't be jealous because I sometimes bestow my favors on others."

"Well, sir, all that I have to say is, that Isabel Hadley has a spirit of her own, and you had better not try it on her."

"My moustache against your 'false front' that I do it to-night," was Harry's rejoinder.

"I don't wear a 'false front,' Harry, and you know it," and good aunt Patty's voice quivered with excitement, "and if you try to kiss her, I hope she'll box your ears for you."

"Don't be revengeful now, because I made a mistake about your hair. I'm going to try it, at any rate."

"Harry, you will make the child cry with your nonsense. Don't do it, now!"

"Cry! she is not one of the crying kind, I can tell you. Here goes. I hope she will not cut me with all those angles of hers, though," and the door opened, and Harry entered the room, looking perfectly innocent of the intended assault.

I was stooping on the sofa, searching for my gloves, when he came and stood by me.

"Good night," said he, extending his hand.

I put out mine. As quick as a flash of lightning his arm was around my waist. His mouth was close to mine, when suddenly he sprang back several feet, looking like anything but a conquering hero. I had dexterously concealed a pin in my mouth, and before his lips could touch mine I thrust it forward, giving him a prick which electrified him. I stooped down and picked up the glove which he had knocked out of my hand again, and then said very quietly,

"It is hardly worth your while to begin kissing me at so late an hour if it is going to take a whole week to do it. Good night, though," and I nodded maliciously at him, as he stood lost in amazement.

Dear little aunt Patty laughed till the tears started.

"You bluffed me off that time, Miss Isabel, but beware of the next," said Harry, recovering himself; and he passed his hand over his mouth, and then examined it to see if there were any traces of blood.

"Yes, I'll beware. But you've lost your moustache, you know, to aunt Patty," and throwing this bomb, I followed the two ladies up stairs.

"You must not mind Harry, Isabel," said aunt Margaret, "he is a spoiled child, and as

full of mischief as a kitten. He is always at his pranks with us."

"Oh! I can take care of myself very well," I replied, secretly delighted at my success.

CHAPTER II.

SUCH was the beginning of my acquaintance with Harry Anstruther, and so it continued during the rest of his vacation.

The next year passed happily to me, but the winter vacation did not bring Harry as formerly. He was an orphan and the uncontrolled possessor of a large fortune, and had made up his mind, as he wrote to his aunts, to see something of the world.

By-and-bye vague rumors of mad, college pranks began to circulate in our little coterie, and the elderly ladies, who assembled at aunt Patty's tea-table, nodded their heads and looked mysterious when master Harry's name was mentioned.

As I entered the parlor one day, I heard a visitor say,

"You should really write to him, Miss Anstruther, and expostulate with him about his conduct. George assures me that he is at the head of all the mischief in college, and he would have been expelled long ago if he had not been so adroit in escaping positive proof. But perhaps George, dear boy, is too severe, for his standard is so high," and Mrs. Welsh arranged her sables with much satisfaction as she spoke.

"His standard is not too high for detraction," said I, with no little temper, as the lady smiled herself out of the room.

Aunt Margaret made no answer, but sighed as her knitting-needles clicked and flashed with unusual rapidity. But the tears came to good aunt Patty's eyes as she said,

"I wouldn't have believed it of Harry. He was always full of fun, and maybe he did just for mischief dress himself up like a robber, and stop the farmers on their way to market, and make them give up their money and things, but I *don't* believe he gambles so," and the most troubled tears I had ever seen in aunt Patty's eyes, stood there now.

"There must be some truth in it, sister," replied aunt Margaret, sternly, "Judge Hale has forbidden him his house," and she turned her back a little more to the light as she spoke.

"Poor boy, and maybe he was in love with Nelly Hale," and aunt Patty, whose warm heart extended its charities to all sorts of troubles, fell into a reverie.

All further discussion of the subject was

stopped by the waiter bringing in an armful of wood for the fire. As he was retiring, aunt Margaret said,

"James, I wish, while we are out driving, you would take down master Harry's portrait from over the mantel, and place it in our chamber."

James was too much astonished to make his usual elaborate obeisance, and stood staring vacantly at his mistress till she reminded him of his duty by adding, "You may order the carriage now."

Aunt Patty had looked up with a frightened air at her sister, but the Misses Anstruther were really heroines to their servants, so it was not till after James had certainly closed the door that she said,

"Oh! Margaret, how can you do so; it seems so cruel for us to desert poor Harry because everybody else does."

"I cannot have this portrait hanging there made an excuse for people like Mrs. Welsh to discuss him as they please," was the reply.

When we returned from our drive, I could have cried too with aunt Patty, to miss the gay, pleasant face, which had looked down so saucily on me so long, in the cheerful morning light, or in the grey gloaming, or flickering firelight, as on the first evening of our acquaintance.

I was now nearly seventeen, and my mirror told me plainly enough that I no longer looked like the imp or elf of Harry's early acquaintance. I was an heiress and a belle; a belle most probably because I *was* an heiress. I had "filled up" certainly; whether as my cousin had insinuated by tea and muffins, I cannot say; but if George Welsh, who was now one of my most devoted admirers, was to be believed, Alice Brant herself would bear no comparison to me in grace.

With poor Harry, in the meanwhile, matters went from bad to worse. The gentleman, who had been his guardian, confessed to his aunts that he had spent every cent of his fortune that was available, and this was by far the greater part of it. Then again, through Mrs. Welsh, whom I now looked upon as a bird of ill omen, we heard of grave professors being caricatured to their faces, and reckless midnight orgies, and all the other evils of college life. But our cup of trouble on his account was filled, when we learned that he had fought a duel. We knew nothing positive about it, only that his opponent had been severely wounded, and that a woman had been the cause.

The morning after we had heard of this, I was called into the sisters' chamber. Aunt Margaret had pushed a little table, on which she was

standing, up to the mantel, and was endeavoring to detach Harry's portrait from the hook on which it hung. She said,

"Isabel, my dear, won't you please to help me down with this? Sister has refused, and I cannot expose ourselves to the remarks of the servants, by having them do it."

"Poor boy, I cannot," said aunt Patty, as she rummaged in her drawers to hide the falling tears.

Aunt Margaret looked around sternly as she answered,

"Sister, it is due to ourselves to forget him."

I assisted her silently, and helped to carry my cousin Harry's portrait to the lumber room.

CHAPTER III.

It was nearly three years after my first introduction to my cousin. The snow had been falling softly and silently all day, and as night came on we drew the curtains in the little parlor, and prepared to pass a cozy evening together. The tea-table was already arranged, and aunt Patty had the silver "caddy" in her hand, measuring out with scrupulous exactness the silver shell full of tea, which constituted her "drawing," when the hall bell rung violently.

"What a dreadful stormy night for any one to be out," said aunt Patty, as she peered into the tea-urn, where she had just thrown the bohea. A stamping in the hall, as if some person was knocking the snow from heavy boots, aroused all our attention; and before we had time to speak, the parlor door opened and Harry Anstruther entered. There was the same open, boyish smile as of old on his face. Aunt Patty dropped the lid of the tea-urn, and sprang forward to meet him with a cry of glad surprise. Aunt Margaret also, on the impulse of the moment, had risen with unusual activity; but before her sister's greeting was over she had resumed her chair, and awaited her nephew's salutation with frigid dignity.

His aunt's manner very perceptibly affected Harry. His greeting was constrained, and I, who had been standing aside, now noticed that his face had a care-worn, sorrowful look, not natural to it.

Presently his eye rested on me. I enjoyed the look of astonishment with which he regarded me, and I said with a low courtesy, and in a tone which mimicked the one he had greeted me with three years before,

"I'm your cousin Isabel, dear."

"Goodness gracious! is it possible? Why you are not such a dreadful *fright* after all," and his old manner returned as he spoke

"No, I'm filled up; tea and muffins, you know," I replied, nodding my head.

We took our seats at the table, and Harry's quick glance soon detected the vacant space over the mantel. A grave look stole over his face, then he said with an attempt at gayety, "No longer worthy, eh, aunt Patty?" But he sighed as he pointed to where the portrait had hung.

Aunt Patty was very much embarrassed as she replied,

"We had it carried up to our chamber, Harry——"

"And from there to the lumber room," interposed aunt Margaret, sternly.

The look, which overshadowed the handsome face of my cousin, made my heart ache for him; and I retired to my own room as soon as tea was over, that I might be no restraint upon him and his aunts.

The next day aunt Patty told me there was something about Harry she could not find out; only that he had acknowledged he had lost nearly all his money; that he was going to Europe for awhile; but that she believed he was still engaged to Nelly Hale.

My cousin was not to sail till the spring. In the meantime we were constantly together, and I began to wonder about Nelly Hale. But he never mentioned her name.

Aunt Margaret's manner toward her nephew softened in spite of herself, and had it not been for shame, I verily believe that the portrait would have been restored to its original place.

The last week of his stay with us had arrived. Our aunts were entertaining a circle of friends in the drawing-room, and we were alone together in the little parlor. I was crocheting a purse for my cousin, talking busily the while of his anticipated tour.

"How I envy you, Harry; I wish I was going too," I said, enthusiastically.

"Will you go, dear Bell?" he cried, suddenly. "Could you love such a worthless, good-for-nothing scamp as I am?"

Nelly Hale, and the gambling, and the duel, all crowded upon my mind. I rose indignantly.

"What do you mean, sir, by offering me the remnants of a heart, and reputation, and fortune? Me?" And I confronted him as I spoke.

Alas! had I been more indifferent, probably I should not have been so angry.

I think he was paler, though his laugh was light, as he asked in his old, mocking way,

"Mercy, Bell! What would you have said if I had been in earnest?"

I was so astonished, that for a moment my

heart seemed to cease beating; but I quickly answered,

"Then I should have informed your aunts, who would have speedily rid me of the annoyance," and I picked up the purse and went on with my crocheting.

I know not what demon prompted that ungenerous reply. My cousin looked at me so reproachfully, that I could scarcely restrain my tears. He arose, walked up and down the room once or twice, as if conquering some emotion, said,

"Forgive me, Isabel. You were justly angry at my supposed trifling; but do not rob me of my aunts' love. It is all I have left now."

My tears were gathering fast. I dared not trust my voice to answer. I would not look up lest I should betray myself. In a short time Harry left the room.

That evening, at the tea-table, he told us that he should leave early the next morning, as he had some business to settle in New York before he sailed. His aunts expressed their astonishment, scanned his face narrowly, and no doubt wondered what new scrape Harry had got in; but I swallowed my tea with a great gulp that nearly choked me. I sat up half the night to finish the purse. I had foolishly wrought blue forget-me-nots on the crimson ground. When I handed it to him the next morning, I tried hard to steady voice and lip, as I said with averted eyes,

"Do not think too unkindly of me, cousin Harry."

Aunt Margaret's spectacles were blurred by the tears which she would not let fall, when she bid Harry good bye, but poor aunt Patty cried as if it was the one great sorrow of her life-time. As for myself, my eyes burned, but there were no tears, even of sympathy, in them now; but my trembling limbs almost refused to support me, and the hand, which he took at parting, must have sent an icy chill through his veins. I saw the carriage drive from the door, then I went to my room, and the desolation I felt, and the tears and moans which escaped me, told me plainly how indifferent I was to Harry Anstruther.

CHAPTER IV

A YEAR after my cousin's departure, I was invited to a bridal party at Mrs. Welsh's. George and myself were on good terms, although he had ceased visiting me long before. In truth he was a fortune or position hunter, both of which he had found in the graceful Alice Brant, whom

Harry had eulogized on the first evening of our meeting.

I had been in the room but a short time, when a beautiful young girl, with a face as fresh as a rose-bud, and as bright as a sunbeam, left the circle surrounding the bride, and coming up to me with the confidence of one who was never repulsed, said,

"Are you not Miss Hadley, Harry Anstruther's cousin?"

I bowed, and as I glanced at the beautiful creature before me, a sickening realization of who she was stole over me.

"I am Nelly Hale," she went on, "but I suppose I am not as well known to you as you are to me."

Alas! too well known. But I did not say so. I only buried my face in my bouquet as I replied that I had often heard my cousin speak of her.

"If he was my brother I could not love him more," she said.

I supposed not, but asked somewhat ironically if "she knew what a brother's love was?"

"No, I never had a brother; and when Harry first went to C—, years ago, we had *such* juvenile flirtations. We vowed regularly twice a week to die for each other, and were very much disappointed that there was no occasion for it, I believe."

She must have thought me dumb at first. The meeting was so unexpected, that it was sometime before I could recover my faculties to speak of *him* to *her*. And I felt most bitterly, for whatever her feelings might have been, I believed that he had loved her sincerely.

She was chatting on in her light, gay way, when a gentleman came to claim her hand for a waltz. Her face brightened still more as she exclaimed,

"Oh! Willie, this is Miss Hadley, Harry's cousin, you know. Mr. Graham, Miss Hadley."

At the mention of "Harry," the gentleman, whose back was partially toward me, as he was about to lead Miss Hale away, turned suddenly, with his fine face sparkling with emotion, as he took my hand, saying,

"You do not know how glad I am to meet you; to see any relative of Harry's."

The waltz seemed now to be forgotten, and Harry, and Harry's present doings, were fully discussed.

"I wish he would come home," said Nelly, gaily, "in his last letter he promised me a set of pink coral from Naples."

I felt some comfort in thinking that I was a kind of woman to whom he could not promise a set of pink coral.

"Do you know, Miss Hadley," said Mr. Graham, suddenly, "that I am indebted to your cousin for all the happiness of my life?"

I looked inquiringly at Nelly, in whose blue eyes the tears were standing.

"Not only her," said he, with a happy laugh.

I took Mr. Graham's arm almost unconsciously, for I felt that much of what we had never known of Harry was to be revealed; and we left the crowded room for the hall.

"Anstruther is such a generous, noble-hearted fellow, that I don't believe he has ever done himself justice to his friends at home," said my companion. "His gay, mischief-loving disposition was always getting him into trouble. He was at the head of all the harmless pranks that drove the professors nearly wild. But, unfortunately, his love of excitement took a quieter but more dangerous turn. He became very fond of card-playing. He lost his money like a prince, but that did not seriously impair his large fortune."

There was a moment's pause in the narrative, and Nelly, who leaned on the other arm, looked up encouragingly in Mr. Graham's face.

"The fellows at college always said Harry and I hunted in couples," continued he. "In truth, I *did* make him my model, but I soon surpassed him in my fondness for gambling and the extent of my losses. One night, oh, God! that night, in my madness I lost all, more than all I had, and I knew, that, if my widowed mother survived the knowledge of my shame, I had made her a beggar. Nelly, too, to whom I had been engaged for a year, I felt would never be allowed to marry a penniless gambler. In my frenzy I was ready to commit suicide; but Harry Anstruther, who had witnessed all, saved me."

Nelly's tears were flowing fast, and the speaker's voice quivered with emotion.

"He declared that it was his example which had first tempted me—but heaven knows *that* was not true—and he never left me on that horrible night, till from his own fortune he had made arrangements to pay my debts. I sometimes think now that I must have been insane to have allowed it—but my old mother and Nelly! As for Harry, he said it was a cause of thanksgiving. It seemed as if our eyes were opened for the first time to the horrible precipice on which we hung, and I believe no earthly power could tempt Harry Anstruther now to touch a card. And with God's help neither will I," and he bowed his head solemnly as he spoke.

"And to think that papa was so unjust to Harry as to refuse to let him come to the house, till Willie heard of it, and told him the whole

truth. I was dreadfully frightened, for fear papa would make me break my engagement with Willie; but he said, that after such a lesson, and with such a friend as Harry, there was not much danger," and, as Nelly spoke, the smiles had already dried away the tears.

"But the duel?" I asked.

"Ah! did you hear of that too?" said Mr. Graham. "We thought it was kept pretty quiet, for Fuller hardly got a scratch, though he deserved something more. He unpardonably insulted a pretty little milliner girl, and boasted of it 'in his cups;' and when Harry remonstrated with him about it, high words ensued; he called your cousin a liar and a coward, and it all ended in the duel."

A little more talk of college life, and we entered the parlor. Harry's entire vindication did not give the unalloyed pleasure it should have done; it was all mingled with regrets for my own hasty pride, bitter regrets for the love I had thrown away. I hurried home from the party and rushed into my aunts' chamber. It was sometime before I could make them comprehend the welcome news.

The next day Harry's portrait again hung over the mantel in the little parlor.

My acquaintance with Nelly Hale ripened into friendship during her visit at P—, and I have promised to act as bridesmaid for her the next winter. Graham had received an unexpected fortune sometime before from a god-father, and had already refunded the money which my cousin had so generously given him.

CHAPTER V.

We had for a long time eagerly scanned Harry's letters for some intimation of his return home, when one day we read,

"I shall probably be with you in two months. Graham is going to be married to my little friend Nelly Hale, which prodigious feat, he thinks, cannot be accomplished without my assistance. Dear aunt Patty, how often have I mystified you with regard to that same Nelly. I believe I was passionately in love with her for one whole year, the first of my college life, though alas! the violent emotion exhausted itself, but for all that, I think she is the darlinest little creature living.

"I am twenty-six, sober twenty-six, dearest aunt, but your kind letter about the restoration of my property, *nearly*, mind I say *nearly*, brought the tears to my eyes. I had enough to live upon economically without it, and I feel somehow as if I had no right to that. My example was so near causing a suicide and two broken hearts at

least. It was all my fault. It seems as if the sufferings of a century were crowded into that night. There are two things, however, that console me, now that Willie has so generously taken all the blame on himself. Aunt Margaret and yourself love me as of old, and if I ever offer my hand to a woman, it will not be with 'only the remnants of a heart, and reputation, and fortune.'"

I was not forgiven.

He came, and we met, not as of old with gibe and jest, for there was more thought on the sun-burned brow, and more dignity in the subdued demeanor of my cousin, and my pride had grown into the pride of a proud woman, and was no longer that of a peevish school-girl or petted heiress.

Well, we two stood beside Willie Graham and Nelly when they were married. There was many a silly joke about "one wedding making another," and I listened in vain for the gay repartees, which, under ordinary circumstances, would have pained me. Harry only said that he was not a marrying man, as long as he could not have Nelly, and I averred that I was so enamored of the single life of my aunts that I should lead it too.

One day I was sitting in the parlor at Judge Hale's alone. My cousin entered and drew a letter from his pocket from aunt Patty. After handing it to me he left the room. I watched his retreating figure, and then glancing on the floor at my feet, I saw the purse which I had knit him. He had undoubtedly drawn it out with the letter. I picked it up and examined it. Alas! the forget-me-nots had all faded, and the tears came as I remembered the afternoon and night on which I had finished it. My letter was unopened, and I dreamed on of what might have been, still stroking out the folds of the purse in an absent way.

"What does aunt Patty say, Isabel?" asked Henry, at my elbow. I started up covered with confusion, and mechanically grasped the purse tighter.

"I think I dropped something," proceeded my cousin, looking on the floor.

With a woman's quick instinct I dropped the purse, and let him find it. But my ruse was of no avail, he had been watching me for some minutes, and did not leave the parlor till—

Well, no matter what. But there was to be a sleighing party that night, and I never enjoyed a ride as much as I did that.

Three months ago, the large drawing-room of the good aunts was thrown open, and the Holland covers were taken off the old-fashioned

damask furniture. There was a vast amount of cake and wine consumed, and any quantity of white satin, and wreaths, and veils, displayed; and Harry, with all his old sauciness come back, vowed that I was never happy till he gave me a chance to write myself Mrs. Harry Anstruther.

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SUNLIGHT CHASING THE SHADOW.

BY FANNIE MORETON.

THE shadow is deepening and casting a lengthening shade over Bessie Irvin's life. For months—months has she toiled in that little attic room. The sunshine has greeted but dimly that weary form. The window—the *only one*, is too small to admit but a feeble ray reflected from yonder stone mansion. Yet it enters *there*, and tiny feet leap joyfully and play in its beams, and little hands fling down book and toy; and try vainly to clasp its merry light. But poor Bessie! there she sits toiling on, oh! how wearily. The soft brown hair is parted on as pure a brow as eyes e'er looked upon. The delicate features are beautiful in their contour. The form is as graceful as that of Lady Emmas reclining on her velvet couch in that sumptuous mansion yonder. Ayel and her step was *once* as light, and her voice, though ever sweet and gentle in its carolling, spoke of joy and *lightness* within. She has lost none of her guileless innocence, though sorrow has cast her withering bane over Bessie's young heart. Father, mother, brothers, sisters, all gone. She has bid, perhaps, an eternal adieu to the vine-covered cottage with its pleasant fields, and clear, running brook, and the little door yard, with its wealth of flowers and gay singing birds.

Her flowers may bloom as beautifully. Her birds warble as sweetly, and the little brook flow on in its unceasing gentle ripple—but Bessie hears them not. The sounds that greet her ears now are those of carts, and rail-cars and freighted omnibuses, and luxurious carriages rolling on with unceasing din.

Once too she loved. But he, who had sworn to be hers, had been called away to distant climes; and the ship, in which he had sailed, had never been heard of more.

Oh! poor Bessie! yours is a hard lot seemingly—but toil on and on, for sooner or later you will meet your reward. If not in this world, in that brighter one to come.

The work has dropped from your hands, and you sink back in utter weariness. Your eyes look down into the street below, and there! as if in mockery of *your* woe, are figures gorgeously clad, and smiling faces. But, do not sigh, sweet Bessie, poverty, however humble, is preferable to gilded vice. They fold the silken robe over

the serpent, *but it lives there still*. There! your weary fingers have taken up the robe again. Its tints, how beautifully blended. Joy! it is almost finished. It is then to encircle form no lighter, limbs no fairer than thy own. But no! check the bitter smile as the thought crosses your mind. Yet the smile is not bitter now, only sorrowful, as you think that each stitch, taken oft-times with a piercing pain, may have perchance to be unripped, and thy scant reward considered "too much." But cheer up, sweet Bessie, and remember that with Christ there is no respect of persons. Yes, your Bible is beside you, your mother's dying gift, and, thank God! her dying request has not been disregarded. Now you have folded the costly robe, and readjusted your own modest toilet. How blithely your step descends the creaking old stair.

Now our little seamstress is on the steps of the noble mansion opposite, for the garment completed is for the Lady Emma. At the magnificent entrance Bessie pauses, then rings the bell timidly. The door is opened by a gentleman passing out. He scans her face earnestly as he passes: Bessie looking up questioningly, nay! wonderingly, while a faint flush overspreads her features. But the footman is waiting, and she enters with trembling steps, and almost ready to faint.

For once Bessie's work was pronounced very beautifully done, and the price paid pleasantly and unhesitatingly. But there was more joy in store for Bessie on that bright New-Year's morning—and never more but once did Bessie Irvin ascend that creaking old stair to her desolate room. For ere she again crossed the threshold of the Lady Emma's dwelling, the same gentleman again stood before her, and asked in a low voice if that indeed could be Bessie Irvin. And Bessie shed tears, many tears, as that voice recalled the old memories that were clinging round her heart—for it was her school-fellow and long-absent lover who thus spoke to her.

So Bessie's tears were soon wiped away, and the old smile of happier days played on her lips—for that same New-Year's morning our gentle Bessie became a happy bride of one who had brought back fame, honor and fortune from a foreign land.

THE BOUND GIRL.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

[Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by Edward Stephens, in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.]

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CHAPTER IV.

MARY MARGARET DILLON lay in the sweet sleep which so frequently follows exhausting efforts. With her right arm she held the strange baby close to her bosom with persevering charity that lived even in her slumber. But her motherly face was turned with the irresistible instincts of nature toward the little chubby-faced fellow at her left, who had been nestling closer and closer under her arm without arousing her, and now lay drowsily comforting himself with his little red fist, at which he tussled and worked with persevering philosophy, now and then giving out a loud, relishing smack, as if determined to notify the little interloper how richly he was provided for.

In the energy of his satisfaction the youngster threw out his feet, and made his tiny elbows play with a vigor that soon aroused Mary Margaret, who gathered up the strange baby to her bosom with a warmer clasp, as if to shield herself from temptation, and then nestled her loving face down to the other baby, and bending back her arm to give him a hug, she began lavishing kisses and blessings upon him.

"Bless the rogue—arrah, bless the crathur. Sure his ginerous Irish blood is up already in consideration of the stranger baby; faix, and isn't he independent as an Irish baby born in this blissed land of liberty should, be sure, containing himself intirely with a taste of his own blissed little fist, that by the token 'll yet work for his mother whin she's feeble and auld. Faix, and wouldn't the father of him be a proud man, this minit, if he could see the little filler aoting in all respects like a gentleman intirely?"

Mary Margaret was interrupted in her pleasant natural talk by a faint shriek that came from the lower end of the ward, and starting up from between the two infants, she threw a skirt over her shoulders and ran down the dim room; but she paused suddenly with an exclamation of terror, for there upon the cot where we left the pale, young mother, she saw a form so fair, so wild, and yet so spirit-like, standing erect in the

smoky light, that all the native superstition of her race rose up to chill her.

"Blessed saints, but it's a wraith," she murmured, sinking gently to her knees, "the poor, beautiful crathur has gone sure enough, and this is the shadow she has left, och, hone—och, hone."

A less fanciful person than good Mary Margaret might have mistaken the vision bowing above the pauper couch for something supernatural. The thin, childish face so white at the temples and forehead; the burning red of the cheeks; those wild, feverish eyes flashing like stars; the long, thick tresses sweeping down like a golden veil to the coverlet: the thin, white hands and arms uplifted in wild grace; the form slender, waving like the stalk of some tall flower that threatens to break with the first blast of wind. It was enough to still the blood in Mary Margaret's veins, and send her frightened speech in fragments of prayer to her lips.

"Whist—whist! what is it sayin' for sure it's words that I hear. Drink, drink! It's alive, it's the poor, young crathur herself clamoring for the drop of could water, and no one forenen to give it. And I, unnatural heathen that I am, lying there atween the babys, and sleeping as if the whole world belonged to me. Water, drink, sartintly, me poor, white darlint, jest aise yerself down till the pilly and see if I doesn't bring yees a hull teapot full."

It was useless making the request. The poor, young thing waved to and fro on the bed, flung out her thin hands, groping in the air for something to lay hold off, and then her fragile limbs seemed to writhe up, she sunk down through the murky white in a pale heap, covered only from sight by the abundance of her golden hair.

"Hist, hist! what is the matter, darlint!" said Mary Margaret, softly dividing the silken waves from the childish face and attempting to arrange the bed.

The young creature looked up, and a gleam of intelligence shot through the fever in her eyes.

"I am parched, I want drink, my head throbs,

my bosom is full of aching fire. My hands—put them in cold water they are so hot—they will not let me touch it while these hands are so burning hot."

"There is no drink here!" said Mary Margaret, searching among some cups and bowls that stood upon a chair near the bed, "not a drop of anything."

Mary ran to her own bed, seized a basin of cold tea that her kindly persuasion had obtained from one of the nurses, and held it to the burning lips of the patient. Then she began to smooth down those long tresses with her hands, and by a thousand gentle movements intuitive to her womanly nature, soothed the delirium that had seized upon the poor girl afresh during the loneliness of night.

As Mary Margaret was performing these kindly offices, she happened to turn her eyes toward a corner of the room, and there she saw the nurse Kelly, not asleep, as she had at first supposed, but with her arms folded on a little board table, her chin resting upon them, and her eyes peering angrily through the light shed from a smoky lamp hung behind her on the wall.

Sharp and angry as the notice of a rattlesnake came that glance through the darkness: and Mary Margaret's hands shook as she sat down the basin of tea with a sort of nervous terror. Still she was too brave and too earnest for any thing like an ignominious retreat even from the glare of those eyes.

The poor, young patient was relieved by the drink so kindly given, and lay very quietly, unconscious of the malignant influence that had crept even to her pauper couch, unmindful of the gentle care that fell like dew around her. But still the noble Irish woman lingered at her post with an instinctive feeling that she was needed to keep watch and ward over that frail life.

But young Ireland in the other cot had at last become heartily dissatisfied with the state of things in that neighborhood. The mouth from which his tiny fist was withdrawn now filled with indignant tears, and Mary Margaret hastily gathering the skirt around her shoulders, ran back to silence the little rebel before he disturbed every patient in the ward.

She lay down by the child outside the bed, and resting on one elbow, for some holy instinct still kept her on the watch. After she had rested a moment, and the voice of young Ireland had subsided into satisfied and half-cooing murmurs, she saw the nurse arise cautiously, open a drawer of the table and steal round to Catharine Long's bed, over which she hovered a moment and

disappeared in her corner again. Then came a few moments of silence, broken only by the deep breathing of the sleepers and a restless moan or two from Catharine Long's cot; but Mary Margaret was strangely wakeful, and as her child sunk off to rest, she arose again and stole down the ward to see if her charge slept. Then the nurse arose and came boldly forward, a strange wheedling smile hung around her lips, and there was something in her look that made Mary Margaret shudder.

"It's very kind of you, I'm sure, Mrs. Dillon, to be taking all this trouble for me, that isn't fit for duty to-night no more than your baby there. I'm very grateful that you will have an eye to this poor thing, for my sick headache just uses me up, and the doctor is very particular about her medicine. If you'd only take charge now while I catch a little nap, it would be a charity to more than one; but do be particular about the medicine."

Mary Margaret was seized with an unaccountable shudder, but she answered quite naturally, "Surely and I'll do me best, marm."

"That's a good soul, don't forget the medicine, the directions are all on the bottles, and— and——"

The voice was husky and eager, and all around her mouth settled a strange pallor, as if the sickness of which she complained had seized with new force upon the woman.

"I'll do my best," repeated Mary Margaret, and she sat down upon the foot of poor Catharine's bed like one who had resolved to guard it well.

The nurse went half way to her chair in the corner, and turned back with her face from the light. "In fifteen minutes it will be time to give her first dose," she said, still huskily, and with an effort; "a tablespoonful, don't forget."

"I'll not forget, will I, me pretty darlint?" answered Mary Margaret, folding the two pale hands of the invalid between her palms, and gazing upon her with kindly mournfulness.

The nurse floated back to her corner like a condensed cloud, and sat brooding there, sometimes with her eyes closed, sometimes with that basilisk glance peering out from above her folded arms. She reminded you of a rattlesnake watching amid its own coils.

Mary Margaret caught these glances once or twice without appearing to regard them, but they kept her intellect upon the alert, and without knowing exactly what she was to guard against, the good woman felt that harm was around her, and that the evil thing must find her watching. A slight change in her position threw the light

directly across the chair upon which the cups and vials used about the sick had been placed, and where she had left her basin of weak tea.

Without having consciously made the discovery, Mary Margaret became aware that the only vial which had stood upon the chair had been moved, and that its contents, a pale wine color, had become white as water. Still the vial was the same, and as she bent over softly to read the label that was also unchanged, "a tablespoonful every hour." This was what she read and had seen before while searching for drink among the empty cups.

Why was this? For what object had the contents of that vial been changed? Who *could* have done it but the nurse, and why *had* she done it? Then Mary Margaret began to ponder over the change in nurse Kelly's manner—the sudden favor into which she had fallen, and an unaccountable antipathy to give the medicine in that bottle seized upon her.

"Isn't it time to give the medicine?" asked a low voice from the corner. "It should be given on the stroke of the hour."

"Yes!" answered Mary Margaret, with a start, "it's time."

She turned her back toward the nurse and received the light over her shoulder. A pewter tablespoon lay upon the chair. She held up the vial, and, pouring a small quantity into the spoon, drank it herself with a rash determination to know, if possible, what the drug was before she administered it. It left a strong taste of opium in her mouth; and, quick as thought, she remembered that morphene was colorless, that a few drops would kill, and she had been directed to give that frail creature a tablespoonful.

Mary Margaret shuddered from head to foot. The blood seemed curdling in her veins; her plump fingers grew cold as they clasped the vial. How much had she drank? Would those few drops be her death? No, no, they could not be enough. She felt sure that God would not let her perish there in the midst of her duty.

"Have you given her the medicine?" asked the hoarse voice again from the clouded corner.

"Not—not yet. I—I am pouring it out," was the reply, and sitting down the vial, she hastily poured out some tea into another spoon and gave it to the patient, who smiled gratefully as the moisture crept through her lips.

"Has she drank it?" again asked the nurse, starting up as Mary Margaret settled the invalid back upon her pillow.

"You see!" answered Mary, pointing to the moist lips of the girl.

The nurse pushed her way between the cot, saw the vial with its cork out and moisture about the neck, and her white lips broke into a half smile, so cold, so deadly, that Mary Margaret shrunk back as if a snake were creeping across her feet.

Still the woman did not seem quite satisfied, but took up the spoon, out of which Mary Margaret had drank, and touched her tongue to the bowl.

"Oh!" she said, rather in a deep breath than with words, "oh! now watch, and I will go to bed awhile. If she sleeps, let her!—if she wakes up, call me."

"And if she is worse, where can I find the doctor?" asked Mary, gazing wistfully at her enemy through the lamp-light, and shuddering at the strange sensations that she fancied to be creeping over her. "The doctor, where is he?"

"Call me if you want any one. Bellevue doctors don't come to the beck and call of their pauper patients."

"But I must have a doctor!" persisted Mary. "*Must!*" echoed the woman, turning deadly white. "Oh!" and with a slow, cat-like movement she crept back to the bed, lingered over the pillow an instant and disappeared, carrying the vial of medicine with her.

Poor Mary Margaret scarcely saw it. Her eyes were growing so heavy, and an oppressive languor weighed down her limbs. She forgot every thing, even the fair girl mother, who opened her eyes and asked so meekly for drink again. All that the poor woman hoped for now was power to get back to her own pauper cot and die close to her baby. She thought nothing of the strange nursing then, for all the feeling left unnumbed in her heart turned to her own offspring.

Half unconsciously she gave the invalid some drink, and then moved with slow, leaden steps across the floor. It seemed as if she had been walking miles when she reached the bed, and swept back the blankets with her slow, heavy hand. The two infants were huddled together below the pillows. One was her own child: with that she wished to lie down and sleep: but the other, it must not perish with her, some one must care for it, but who?

Heavier and heavier grew her brain, still kind thoughts lingered there last. She took up the strange baby, staggered with it down the ward, and laid it softly into the fair bosom of the young girl but late so feverish and delirious.

"It must not starve, and it must not die," said Mary Margaret, in her thick, fettered speech. "Take care of it. I—I must take no baby but my own."

And with a still slower and more dragging step, Margaret went back to her cot, fell down, and become senseless as stone.

The sick girl grew calm as Mary became more and more like the dead. Her slender arms wound themselves like vine tendrils around the child.

A smile stole over her mouth, and a cool, dewy moisture crept, like dew upon the leaves of a lily, over her neck and forehead, and thus with this her healthful life closing around them, the woman and the child slept.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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"SAVE IN SOMETHING ELSE."

BY ELLEN ASHTON.

"MUTTON-CHOPS again for dinner," said the well-fed looking Mr. Finley. "Really, my dear, it's too bad, when you know that, if there's any thing I detest, it is mutton-chops."

"I wasn't aware, James," answered the wife, a care-worn woman, apologetically, "that you dialiked mutton-chops so very much. I know, indeed, that you preferred beef-steak; but then beef is so high, especially sirloin-steaks."

"Well, well, never mind for to-day," replied Mr. Finley, crossly, helping himself to a chop. "But don't, for mercy's sake, give me any more of this stuff, meat I will not call it. Sirloin-steaks I must have. You can easily save it in something else."

Save it in something else! "But how," asked the wife of herself, "is this to be done?" Her weekly allowance was already as small as it could well be, considering how many mouths she had to feed, and that she was compelled to disburse more or less of it continually for "sundries, that's nothing at all," as Mr. Finley said. Now it was omnibus hire; now it was a new broom; now it was for mending a broken pane; and now it was for a dozen of new tumblers, or cups, or plates, or pie-dishes. Sometimes it was even for cigars, her husband saying, as he left the house, "you must give me half a dollar, Anne, to buy cigars as I go down town; for I find I haven't a bit of small change; and I can't do without my afternoon smoke."

The next day, there was a juicy sirloin-steak for dinner, but only one kind of potatoes.

"Why, how is this? How is this? No sweet potatoes to-day, when I like, as you know, my dear, roasted sweet potatoes, particularly with steak."

"I thought I would save the extra money for the steak in that way," timidly answered the wife.

"Good gracious no! I'd rather do without anything else," tartly replied the husband.

"Positively, my whole dinner's spoilt: and such a luscious steak too. How could you be so absurd!"

The tears came into the wife's eyes. But she knew that her husband hated what he called "a scene," and so she choked down her emotion. There were few words spoken during the meal, for Mr. Finley was out of temper, and his wife did not dare trust herself to talk, lest she should break down.

The third day, the steak was excellent and the sweet potatoes browned "to a turn." Mr. Finley was in capital humor, as he always was over good eating, until the dessert came in, which consisted of a plain rice-pudding. At sight of this the gloom gathered on his brow.

"Poor man's pudding, I declare. Really, Anne, one would think, from the fare you provided, that I was a bankrupt."

"Indeed, James, I do try to please you," said the wife, bursting into tears. "But I can't afford to give you everything, provisions are so high: and I thought you'd rather have this cheap pudding, than do without your steak or sweet potatoes."

"Pshaw! Don't cry," hastily replied Mr. Finley. "To be sure I'd rather do without a good pudding than not have the others," he continued, more placably. "But there's really no necessity of it, my dear, for, in so large a household as ours there are plenty of things off which the price of a good pudding might be saved."

No more was said on the subject that day. But, a few mornings after, Mr. Finley, on tasting his coffee, said, suddenly putting down his cup,

"What's the matter with your coffee, my dear? Really, that grocer has cheated you. Why," tasting it again, "this stuff is Laguyra, and not Java at all."

"It is not the grocer's fault," Mrs. Finley mustered courage to say. "I knew it was Laguyra

when I bought it. Our expenses are so high, my dear, that we must save in something; and I thought it would be felt least, perhaps, in the coffee."

"The very last thing to save in," angrily said Mr. Finley, pushing away his cup. "I'd rather drink cold water than this strong, coarse Laguyra." And cold water he did drink, though his wife, almost ready to cry, offered to have some tea made.

Mrs. Finley is still endeavoring to "save in something else," for her husband will not deny himself in anything, and forgets to increase her allowance. Her last experiment was to forego a new spring bonnet. But her husband, on seeing

her come down dressed for church, on a sunshiny May morning, with her last year's bonnet on, grew very angry, declaring that "there was no need to make herself look like a fright, he wasn't a broken merchant." But, when one of the children told why the old bonnet was worn, he made no offer to increase his wife's stipend, but only grumbled, sulkily, that, "she might have saved it in something else."

When I see a well-fed, dogmatic husband, who has a care-worn wife, I think of the sirloin-steak, the pudding, and the bonnet; and wonder if poor Mrs. Finley is the only woman, who, to gratify a selfish husband, is made the victim of saving "IN SOMETHING ELSE."

MEETA CARR.
A LEAF FROM A BACHELOR'S NOTE-BOOK.

BY MISS ALICE GRAY.

I NEVER saw two people that seemed so "made for each other," as did Meeta Carr and my friend Job Talfourd. One rarely thinks of such a thing in reference to persons that have never been brought together, but the first time I saw Miss Carr, as her head appeared above the ship's side she was climbing, I felt that Job's Venus had risen from the depths of the sea. I wished that he was there. It was a gala-day. The vessel was to be christened, and notwithstanding his name, Job was well-fitted to play his part in such a scene. I suppose his godfathers and godmothers had to answer for the rounds of imprecations he bestowed upon his cognomen. He always wrote himself J. Talfourd, and considered it a personal insult for any one to ask what the initial represented.

It is a wonder that I did not fall in love with Meeta Carr myself that day, for I never saw any being so beautiful as she broke the bottles of wine; but I had—a previous engagement. I became an intimate friend of hers, however, a frequent guest at her uncle's splendid house in Fourteenth street; sat by her at dinner-parties, feeling all the charm her grace and tact lent to her deep-toned thoughts and feelings, and danced German quadrilles with her at midnight. The men, without exception, worshipped and flattered her, and she seemed, by a sort of chemical analysis, to separate whatever there was of truth or sincerity in their compliments—that only, she received; all felt that the rest floated down the stream. She had none of those little nets and lines by which many women gain admiration. It took well—this gay indifference. The conservatories were ransacked for choice bouquets for her; and her door was besieged with anonymous presents, which were straightway looked up in a dark closet.

It was almost as exciting as champagne to study daily such a deep heart and mind. And the sparkles were not wanting. Some were flashed from Meeta's pride, which would admit very few into the penetralia of the sanctuary—the exception in my favor a great compliment therefore. Another was that she never looked upon me or behaved toward me as if there was any probability of my ever becoming her lover.

But in talking to Miss Carr, one now and then seemed, if I may so express it, to come to the bottom of affairs unexpectedly. You could not say it was too soon, but it was when you had thought a fresh fount of feeling just opening. I discovered the reason of this by the merest accident. Meeta Carr had no idea of religion, hardly of a God. I do not mean that she was an Atheist, neither had she the easy creed of the world. But the sentiment, the feeling, even in its most general form, was not in her. She told me, with wonder at my wonder, that the idea of a Disposer of all things had never once entered her mind till suggested by some one else. She could talk and think of a future life, but the thought of a God ruling over the present, with whom she had any connection, could find no foothold in her mind. I tried to rouse a feeling that I thought must only slumber, but in vain. She would look at me calmly and smile. One day I concluded an eloquent burst. "Do you understand me, Meeta?" I asked.

"No," she quietly replied.

I desisted after this, but wondered that such a lack was not more visible, and that it did not extend itself farther.

When our party was made up for Newport in the summer, I wrote to Job Talfourd to meet us there. In common with every one else, he was dazzled with Miss Carr, and at once devoted himself to her. The drives and polkas he begged for were granted far more freely than to older acquaintances, his flowers were worn, his instructions at the bowling-alley accepted, &c.

One day I was praising him to her, when she said quietly, "I do not understand your friend. Tell me his peculiarities."

"I think his character easily read," I answered, watching him closely, "with the exception of a sensibility as tender as a woman's. He is a poet, as you may have discovered, and has perhaps indulged too freely in the license of genius; but you ladies will not like him the worse for that."

As we rose to go in—we had been sitting on the piazza in the moonlight—Job suddenly came up the steps. I looked quickly around at Meeta. Her face was quiet, but I saw she was holding

her breath to keep the color from rising. I felt convinced that she had undertaken to win Talfourd's heart—undertaken it with all a woman's wilfulness, the more quickly because she saw it would be difficult. Yes, the proud beauty, so disdainful of admiration and homage, would change her character and bearing, and try all ways of winning devotion. Strange inconsistency! Fain would I have given her more help, but I too was puzzled with Talfourd. He went too far not to go farther.

Late that same night, I was walking down to the beach with him, when he suddenly collared me, exclaiming, "Do you love Meeta Carr?"

"What the deuce do you mean? Hands off," I replied, shaking myself clear.

"Do you love Meeta Carr I ask?"

"Do you?"

"Yes—no—I don't know."

"Say no, then. Meeta Carr is not a woman to be loved with a hesitation."

"I know it." After a pause he continued, "you have not answered my question. You have been playing a part. You love Meeta Carr and she loves you."

"Take care, Talfourd, what you say. I have not the patience of your namesake."

"Namesake be hanged."

"I will answer you in plain words. I do not love Miss Carr, and never shall."

"And why not?"

"I deny your right to ask the question."

"Is she not worthy of being loved?"

"Aye! nobly, sincerely."

"Has she not a true heart?"

"Truer than you think; with feelings far more deep and underlying than you have any idea of."

There was a hop the next night. How radiant Meeta looked! She was dressed in white, her skirt caught with bunches of ivy-leaves, and a garland of the same twined in her glossy curls. She wore a splendid wreath on her bosom, reaching from shoulder to shoulder, which a little marred the symmetry of her costume, but I fancied, and afterward learned, that it was Talfourd's gift. He did not come until late, and then only said a few words to her, and devoted himself to a little, blue sylphide from Philadelphia. I noted the fierce pang of jealousy that shot through Meeta's heart. All that evening she eagerly tried to attract his attention. She who before had scarcely deigned to accept!

Satin slippers were beginning to look soiled and frayed, when he relinquished her hand after the single dance he had asked that evening. I saw the feverish expression in her eyes. Suddenly she extended her arm in a strange manner,

I thought, and her bracelet lay broken at his feet. He raised it, and asked permission to have it mended. She haughtily refused. He seemed nettled at this, and turning hastily left her without a word.

The ball was breaking up. I heard Talfourd make engagements for meeting the little girl in blue, at the bowling-alley the next morning, and also to drive her on the beach at six. Miss Carr had refused several invitations for the beach in hopes he would ask her. I joined her in the embrasure of a window. The music ceased, and we heard the melancholy roar of the sea. The night looked dreary without. There were tears in Meeta's eyes, and I knew the fast-thinning ball-room looked dreary through them. I half wished Talfourd would approach, but Meeta knew better. She knew that a ball-room is no place for woman's most subtle weapon. The next moment she looked up from her drooping wreath with an easy smile, "I believe my mother is waiting." Oh, smiles and flowers and jewels, how much do ye hide! Was hers the only aching heart in that Newport ball-room that night?

Dancing, flirting, promenading, manoeuvring, ten-pins, fast horses, sherry-cobblers, moonlight *tele-a-teles* and Polka Redows went on at Newport. Well for those who had not put their heart on the game! I beheld with wonder the transformation of my friend Meeta Carr. Her quick and practised tact prevented others from seeing anything in her actions but the caprice of a petted beauty. She had a constitutional fear of horseback exercise. I had once seen her, after many solicitations, tremblingly allow herself to be placed on the back of a steady, old worn-out Rosinante, but at his first step she turned deadly pale, and but for assistance would have fallen fainting from the saddle. Now Talfourd greatly admired a lady equestrian. On this account she determined to conquer her dread. But her riding lessons were hours of torture. She often returned to her room with a headache for the day. She learned to ride with grace, as she did everything else, but never without a palpitating heart, and a sigh of relief on dismounting.

Talfourd was a wonder to me as well. His behavior to Miss Carr was always distant and reserved, and yet he almost constantly sought her society.

"Lawrence, I leave Newport to-morrow," he said to me one day.

I was not surprised the next evening to hear Miss Carr announce to her bevy of admirers, that the time set for their return to the city was the beginning of the next week.

Again in New York, her trial to win Talfourd's love continued. I knew that her mornings were passed in close study of the German metaphysical works he loved, and urged upon her. She had no fancy for such things, but still would dim her bright eyes poring over them when she longed to be abroad in the breezy October noon.

All at once she stopped and drew back. She was cool and smiling as a snow-drift. Was it jealousy? I had seen that passion urge her to the putting forth of all her powers. Had she concluded it hopeless? No, the change would not have been so sudden. I watched her for a week and learned the explanation. She had a poor cousin, plain and delicate, to whom Talfourd's feeling heart had made him show many attentions. He would bring her the lingering flowers of autumn, move her chair to a sunny window, reach her a fire-screen, tell her the gossip of the town, and in a thousand nameless ways cheer the poor girl's existence. These things Meeta had understood and admired, but one day she saw him pick up a bunch of faded chrysanthemums that lay beside the piano, and conceal them in his bosom. They were Laura's, and he stood aghast. God forbid that she should come between that poor girl and a love that would be to her as the one ewe-lamb of her life! With all the direst generosity of her nature, she began at once to crush back her feelings. I even revered her as I looked on her trembling lips and calm brow. With another, even her proud spirit would have struggled, but with her poor, sick cousin—no! Talfourd saw her anxiety not to eclipse Laura in her presence, saw she had misinterpreted his attentions, and took care that she should do so no more. The incident of the flowers was accidentally explained—he had thought them hers. Her proud spirit was laid open before him, and by her own generosity. And so it was that meeting at a bridal reception, after a month or two more of eager trial and heart-burning on Meeta's part, Talfourd said, in the most every-day manner,

"Ah! Miss Carr, I am glad to see you here, for I should have only had time to leave my P. P. C's at your door. I am going abroad."

Meeta went through the suitable surprise and regret. "When do you sail?" she inquired, calmly.

"On Monday. I will not say good-bye. *Au revoir.*"

Each took a smiling and careless farewell. Meeta hurried into the refreshment-room, where after a hasty glance to see that she was not observed, she filled for herself a brimming glass of Margaux, and drank it almost at one swallow.

Before Talfourd sailed, I discovered that he had found out Meeta Carr's great defect.

The birds had sung the new music of two spring-times to the skies of America, blue as those of Italia—twice had the forest fairies of the New World kissed every branch and stem with their loving and glowing lips, while Talfourd and I wandered in "foreign parts." I had joined him in the Levant, and we had travelled over the East together. We had got back to Paris again, and found it ringing with the beauty and grace of a young American girl. At the opera, a few nights after our arrival, we observed a sudden stir and raising of glasses. "*Voila,*" said the enthusiastic young Frenchman, who had been gabbering to us of large, wondering eyes, and pearly teeth, and exquisite shoulders. It was Meeta Carr.

We went round to her box. At first I was deceived by the well-trained self-possession with which she greeted Talfourd, but I happened to look down among the folds of her ermined cloak, and my eye caught the quick clasping and unclasping of her small hand. Her remarks to me were in French, but after the first words of salutation she spoke to him in English. The unconscious compliment was not lost. He seemed at once under a spell. I had never thought that he really loved Meeta, and had fancied that two years had effaced all impressions, but a true poet's heart was that of my friend Job. What a name for a son of thine, Apollo! The embers of affection could never become entirely dead. And Meeta? I soon saw that the struggle was to recommence.

She had much to tell the next morning of the events of two years. The great sorrow of her life had fallen upon her. Her mother had died very shortly after my departure. For a moment I hoped that grief had led her to look to a higher power, but alas! no! Her lame brother's health had brought her with her uncle to Europe. To this child, the last of her immediate family, she clung with idolatrous tenderness.

I knew there was little food for the hope that glittered through her downcast eyelashes when she spoke of Talfourd; and Paris was of all places the last in which to indulge it. Frivolous and perhaps heartless as French women may be, they are most of them unaffectedly religious, and this without the embarrassment and secrecy in it which distinguish Protestants. Poor Meeta!

I was hardly prepared for her passionate turning away from all homage to seek that of Talfourd. Paris was at her feet. Men of the world, scholars, military men, noblemen, poets, pursued her with exquisite gallantry, delicate

flattering attentions; but she sent them down the wind as if not worthy of a thought. Oh! how many arts love taught her, and how day by day her feelings grew more eager, her heart sickness more intense. She did nothing unmaidenly, nothing forward, but it seemed as if her feelings could not be repressed. Talfourd was too absent-minded to be a very close observer, but I thought he must see this. Many an irascible Frenchman looked at him with a muttered "*sacre*," as his own attentions were repulsed for those which Talfourd offered with such a strange, variable, uncertain manner.

Summer drew on, and the Baths of Lucca were recommended for little Charley Carr. To my surprise Talfourd insisted upon going thither also.

"You had better stay where you are," I said. "Do you know what you are doing?"

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"You understand me. I do not wish in such a connection to speak the lady's name even to you!"

He looked offended and turned away. The next morning he said, "I am going to Italy when the Carrs go. You can come with me or not as you choose."

"But Talfourd——"

"If you wish to continue your last night's remarks, Lawrence, you must excuse me. We will not resume that subject at this or any other time."

I knew Job did not get his temper from the land of Uz, so I said no more.

At the Baths the same scene was re-enacted. There was much company there, and Meeta queened it over all. The impressible Italians raved about her. There was a wealthy English nobleman, one of the most striking men I ever met, who would have given half his fortune to bear back such a bride to his velvet Westmoreland glades. I did hope that some one would succeed in diverting Meeta's regards.

"This is my first and shall be my last attempt at match-making," said I to myself. "How much would I give if I had not been the means of bringing Talfourd and Miss Carr together."

As I better read Meeta's passionate heart, I feared she would break through conventionalism, and throw herself upon Talfourd's compassion. How much pride had she already cast aside for him!

The Baths of Lucca are "located," as a Yankee would say, in a narrow valley, on both sides of which the rise is abrupt. There are many lovely hill-side walks. One day I came upon my two friends seated beneath the shadow of a

spreading chesnut. Meeta's uncle, who had been her companion, had strolled farther up the mountain. Talfourd was trying to sketch the drooping arch of her eyebrow. Failing in the attempt, he began tracing over the original with the corner of a card, "to get his fingers into the way of the curve," he said. Suddenly stopping, he pressed the card to his lips, and replaced it not in his pocket, but in his bosom. Meeta sat still with her usual grace. I found myself *de trop*. Miss Carr's manners, however, had lost their former *retenue*. They had become restless and impetuous. Foreigners thought nothing of it, but she would not have been as much admired in England as formerly.

At the next ball given by the duke, Talfourd was constant at her side, and hanging upon his words, she seemed scarcely able to spare a thought for an attempt to veil her preference. She secretly watched his eyes to guide her in every little particular. One trifle struck me that evening. All Italians have a horror of perfumes, so that Miss Carr's Hediosma and Ess Bouquet which she used profusely, attracted attention. A day or two before I had heard Talfourd strongly express his agreement with the natives of the country. That night, for the first time, I lifted an unscented handkerchief.

Talfourd and I occupied a sitting-room in common. As I was pulling off my pumps that night I heard him leaping up stairs. He dashed across the room without a word and bolted himself into his bed-room. The next morning he asked me in a melancholy, but firm tone, if I was ready to go with him to England. And so the day of our departure was fixed for the next Wednesday.

On Tuesday there was a sketching party made up. We wandered about for some hours, Talfourd hovering near Miss Carr with wistful looks and silent, sad attentions. Our cloth for a late dinner was laid upon the grass. Poor little Charley Carr sat at the head in high glee. He had been carried up in his chair, for his sister never could bear him long away from her.

The sloping rays were glimmering through the lovely chesnut woods. We were standing on the brink of a cliff watching the shadows creep up its sides, when we heard a sudden cry. Miss Carr sprang round the angle of the cliff and uttered a scream of horror. Her little brother had ventured on a ledge in quest of berries. The rock on which he had crawled had loosened and fell, and he barely had time to fling himself toward another crag, where he hung by his hands. All access to him seemed impossible. The precipice was almost perpendicular, and far below

among the jagged rocks foamed a dark mountain torrent. What was to be done? The poor child looked up with a face of dumb horror. Talfourd's eye caught a jutting rock near, and he instantly threw off his coat. "Let me go, signor," said a Luccese peasant, who had been with us during the afternoon, "I am used to these mountains. It were madness for you."

The man instantly began to climb down the cliff. With suspended breath we watched his progress. He reached the rock, but the distance from the child was greater than he had thought. He could do nothing. Sick with disappointment, we looked in each other's faces. The man retraced his steps to reach another crag, from which grew a stunted tree. Carefully he began to climb out to the end of its branches. In the meantime, Charley had managed to draw his feet up on the rock, and crouched there, clinging to the matted vines. Meeta had been cheering and encouraging him, but now she covered her face. A German girl by her side breathed a low "*mein Gott*," and she suddenly looked up with an expression I never shall forget—intense, puzzled, eager, wistful. Many an ejaculation of prayer was uttered aloud; and she looked from one to another, and then almost writhed in agony. *She had no God—no God to pray to!*

The peasant had now reached the outermost branch, from which he stretched down his athletic arm to the child who could just grasp his fingers. "Climb up to my shoulder, so that I can get hold of you, can't you, my boy?" he said.

Poor Charley's lameness almost prevented this. He tried often vainly. "The branch is parting," whispered some one, as a loud crack was heard. The brave Italian cast one glance at the body of the tree, then at the abyss over which he hung. "Signori, my wife and children," he said, looking up; and then to Charley, "once more—for life—for life!" This time he was successful, and the man's strong grasp was on his arm. One

mighty effort, and he swung him clear of the overhanging crag, away above his head, to a broad rock whence many eager hands bore him to the top. The peasant had just time to get off the branch when the last fibre parted.

For a moment I thought the revulsion of feeling would absolutely strangle Meeta. Then she bowed her forehead on a rock near which she knelt, and her lips moved in thanksgiving to God. Yes, in that hour the heavens were opened for her. Her burden of gratitude forced her to scale them, for all earth flung it back. There was silence while she lifted up her awed and overwhelmed heart. When she rose, and Charley sprung to her straining embrace, there was an altogether new expression on her countenance. She looked around on hill, and vale, and river, as if a new world had burst upon her.

I do not think she thought of Talfourd then, but his whole soul was laid at her feet. That one prayer had won—won what absorbed and wearying effort and affection had failed to do alone. Dizzy with emotion, her tottering steps were supported by his arm. There was no need of words. His whole being went forth to her with a passionate abandonment that could not but satisfy even her.

The brave peasant was generously rewarded, but I think he cared more for Meeta's tears on his hand.

What a delirium of joy glowed in my beautiful friend's eyes the next day! Time and eternity, this world and the next were casting their floods of happiness at her feet.

"I thought we were to be on our way to England to-day, Talfourd."

He looked at me as if I was wild—then laughed. "Oh! I recollect. Well—I'm not going to England just now, my dear fellow."

They were married in Italy, and Talfourd's ardent affection for his lovely bride was—I'll leave it to novel writers to describe.

A CHASE OFF THE GUINEA COAST.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

THE sky was without a cloud, and the noon-day sun, pouring vertically downward, filled the atmosphere as with the breath of a furnace. Not a zephyr rippled the glassy surface of the bay. A few birds wheeled lazily overhead, or settled slowly in flocks on the white strand of the beach. The broad expanse of the deep was unwhitened by a solitary sail. The low, mangrove shores stretching around three-quarters of the horizon, and the white surf outside the inlet on the western seaboard, formed a picture as monotonous as could be imagined. The stifled roar of the distant breakers was the only sound that broke the stillness of the scene. A deep, oppressive silence hung over sea and sky.

Close in to a point of the shore, and in not more than two fathoms water, lay a dark, rakish schooner, swinging by a single anchor with the tide, which now, at a half ebb, was running swiftly out to sea. The inlet, with its seaboard of breakers, could just be seen abaft the main chains of the schooner, far away on the western horizon. A hot, undulating haze waved in the distance; the sea glowed like molten lead; and only the sluggish ripple of the tide against the schooner's bows broke on the silence of that sultry noonday.

A beautiful craft was that schooner. She was painted of a deep black, unrelieved by a single line of white: her mould was clear and sharp; her bows tapered off like a knife; her tall, whip-stalk masts raked gallantly backward; and her yards, sails, and rigging, betokened the highest discipline in her crew. Her high bulwarks, surmounted by a monkey rail running aft, concealed much of her deck, but enough was seen to show by its extreme whiteness, and the burnish of her brass mountings, that she was no common merchantmen; while the two ports on either side, from which frowned the deadly carronades, and a long swivel gun mounted amidships, warned one that she was not unused to conflict. Yet no signs of life were discernible about her.

It was some three hours after the meridian, when a slight ripple ruffled the surface of the bay, and as it came down toward the schooner, a score of men, as if by magic, appeared on her decks; the anchor was heaved up, and catted; and the fore-sheet and jib hoisted away. As

her bow caught the breeze, she fell off before the wind; her mainsail and topsails were set; and in less than a quarter of an hour she was sweeping down the inlet like a sea-fowl on the wing. Before sundown her white sail could just be seen upon the western seaboard, appearing and disappearing amid the spray, as she rose and fell on the horizon.

During the whole of that day an American frigate was lying becalmed, hull down, in the offing. But when the grateful breeze reached her from the shore, her sails were sheeted home, and she began to lay off and on, as if watching for some expected prize. Suddenly a hoarse voice hailed from her foreyard,

"A sail—broad on the weather bow."

"What's her rig?" hastily exclaimed the officer of the deck, as the crew of the frigate swarmed on the decks, and covered her sides at the signal.

"A fore-and-aft topsail and flying jib——"

"She's the craft we've been looking for, Mr. Weldon," said the captain, drawing a long breath, as he took the glass from his eye, after a protracted gaze, "her mould, her rig, her conduct, everything speaks it. We've got her now."

"She's the worst slaver on the coast," answered the lieutenant, "and has often boasted that she defied us."

In a few minutes every stitch of canvass was spread that could draw; and before long the frigate began to overhaul the schooner. The latter evidently persisted in her design of getting to sea, and for this purpose was standing boldly across the track of the man-of-war, notwithstanding the risk it involved, doubtless trusting to her reputation for speed to make good her escape. Perceiving this, the captain, when the frigate came within long cannon range, ordered a fire to be opened on her.

"We've cut away her fore-top-sail—see how she falls off," exclaimed the lieutenant, as the ball from the man-of-war whizzed through the schooner's rigging.

"Bear away a point or two, quarter-master—let drive there with your forward guns."

"Ay—ay, sir!" answered the gunner, as his battery opened on the flying clipper.

A few minutes of breathless suspense passed. None of the frigate's shot told. The schooner,

meantime was directly ahead, about a mile off, lying right across our track. If she could succeed, the chances of her capture would be almost destroyed, for night was coming on. A single glance satisfied the captain that to circumvent her required immediate action.

"Port your helm—port—a—port," he thundered, springing upon a gun carriage, and holding on by a rope, as he leaned over to catch a better view of the chase, "keep her away there now—steady—steady."

"She begins to find she's entrapped," said the first lieutenant, after a few minutes trial had satisfied all that she could not pass across the frigate's bows in safety, "see she wears—she's luffing into the wind's eye."

"And by St. George, she will make her port again, and leave us to cut her out with our boats, unless we are quick—starboard—quarter-master—ha—ard," and as the giant vessel came up into the wind, her huge sails flapped heavily against the masts a moment, and then as she fell off on the other tack they filled again, driving her through the swell with such force, that the spray flew almost to the very fore-top.

The scene was now one of absorbing interest. The low coast, presenting its white, sandy beach in front, and the thick groves of tropical plants farther back from the shore, lay a league or two up on the weather bow; while the surface of the sea between the frigate and the breakers was white with the foam and ripples. Toward this coast the schooner was now stretching under every rag of canvass that would draw, and such was the excellence of her mould and rig, that she could lay several points nearer to the wind than the frigate, and still gain rapidly upon her. It soon became evident that she would make the inlet, though the man-of-war would fall some points to leeward. In an instant the captain's determination was taken.

"Bear away, quarter-master—let her come round a bit—all ready there—and now give her a broadside, my boys—fire high and don't hit the poor wretches in her hull."

Quick as lightning the gallant frigate fell off from her course, and just as she presented her broadside to the flying schooner a storm of fire burst from her sides that made the old ship stagger again. The foremost of the schooner tottered and went overboard, dragging with it all its hamper into the deep. The slaver payed off at once, and the next instant the mainmost following its predecessor with a loud crash, the late rakish craft rolled a wreck upon the waters.

"Ten and a half," sung out the man at the chains

"Steady then, steady—run her in as close as you can, quarter-master," said the captain.

"Eight—seven and a half—seven," sung out the man with the lead, at as many casts.

"It shoals fast—but steady—steady."

"Six and by half six—five."

"We must haul off," said the captain, "port your helm—around all—pipe away the boat's crews, for we shall have to cut her out."

The shrill whistle of the boatswain shrieked through the ship; the crews were mustered; the boats were lowered away; the men took their stations, and with a loud cheer the little fleet pulled rapidly away after the now disabled schooner. The pursuit had been protracted into the twilight, and darkness was already settling on the face of the deep when the boats left the frigate. The outline of the schooner's hull could just be caught sight of, low and dark upon the waters, close in upon the land. Far away lay the coast, a shapeless mass of shadow, the surf painted, like a white line, in the foreground. Above not a star was seen. The clouds were in thick masses overhead, and were gathering wild and ragged from the horizon. In a few minutes, as the darkness increased, the coast vanished in the gloom. Then the outline of the schooner died faintly away, and one by one the boats were lost in the obscurity, until nothing was perceptible from the decks of the frigate, except the comb of the sea for a few fathoms around her, and her own tall and shapely masts, towering above until lost in the deep darkness overhead.

Moments passed away, which grew almost into hours, and yet the same pitchy darkness continued. Nothing had been heard of the boats. Often were the eyes of the crew turned toward the quarter where the schooner lay, but not a rocket rose, nor musket flashed upon the night as a signal of her boats' success. All was silent as the grave. The wash of the swell against the frigate's bows, and the low melancholy wail of the wind were the only sounds breaking on the deep stillness of the night.

"There they go—the signal—the signal," shouted a dozen voices on the quarter-deck, as a rocket shot up into the air and arching gracefully over, burst into a dozen stars, and then fell in a shower of sparkles to the sea. By the wild, unearthly light flung for an instant over the scene, the frigate's boats might be observed, formed in line, sweeping steadily up to the dismantled schooner. But in another instant all again was dark.

A few moments of thrilling excitement ensued. Eagerly the frigate's crew waited for the sounds

of the fray. Minutes passed away, yet no musketry rattled, no guns roared upon the night. What could be the cause? Had the schooner been deserted? Had she offered no resistance? Each man looked at his neighbor with surprise written on his countenance. All at once, a vivid, blinding light filled the whole atmosphere as if by magic; a stream of fire in the direction of the schooner shot up into the heaven: and then, for one instant, sky, sea and shore was revealed with terrible distinctness; a confused mass might be seen darting upward from the deck of the slaver; a roar followed as of the Archangel's trump; the frigate quivered from the keelson to the truck: and then a darkness, as sudden and as awful as that momentary flash, and in which everything appeared swimming before the aching eyes, fell upon the scene. There was a moment of silence.

"God grant the boats are safe," ejaculated the captain, "they have blown themselves and the poor wretches up!"

Every man on board was horror-struck. It was long before the sensation passed away, and it might have continued longer, had not the captain dissolved the spell by ordering the remaining boats to be manned, and go to the relief of the sufferers if any yet remained alive.

Never sped a barge quicker over the waters, than that sent from the frigate on this errand of mercy. The men bent to their oars with enthusiasm, and soon reached the spot where the catastrophe had occurred.

"Forward there at the bow, what is that shadowy object ahead?" said the officer at the helm.

"Boat ahoy!" shot across the night in reply, and directly the frigate's launch appeared in

sight. Greeting her with three hearty cheers, the new-comers hastily inquired respecting the fate of their other comrades, and learnt, to their relief, that the boats of the frigate were all saved; for that, by some mistake, the magazine of the slaver had exploded while they were yet a sufficient distance from her to ensure their safety. The poor wretches in her hold, however, as well as the slaver's crew, were all lost in that terrific explosion.

The launch had already been engaged in searching over the spot where the schooner had been last seen, for her ill-fated passengers, and a more awful spectacle, her lieutenant said, he had never witnessed. Her hull had already sunk, but fragments of the wreck—human bodies torn to pieces, scorched to cinder, disfigured, mutilated, bloated, scarred, and blackened in the most frightful manner, covered the sea in the vicinity. Even while he spoke, a hideous corpse floated by, its distorted face looking almost fiend-like in the gloom.

The other boats soon joined the barge from the frigate, and every exertion was made to discover if any human beings of the slaver's ill-fated burden were alive. But though shattered timbers and mangled bodies were found floating on every hand, not a man, woman, or child, yet living, was picked up. After a search of nearly two hours, the crews of the boats returned with heavy hearts to the frigate.

The next morning the search was resumed, but in vain. Far along the coast floated the wreck of the schooner and the disfigured bodies of the slaves, with here and there a human being of a lighter skin, but no one was ever rescued alive from his watery grave.

THE FRENCH MARTLETS.

BY ALICE CARY.

ONCE upon a time, and in a part of our federal Union which need not be designated, there lived a man of the name of Higgins—Squire Higgins he was called by his old-fashioned neighbors, who, be it understood, entertained the highest respect for him—by the younger and more enthusiastic portion of society he was not unfrequently denominated an “old fogey.” The chief ornament of his front door yard was a martin-box, which had been built shortly after his marriage, and was for the times a very good house—but at the time we write of the squire he was an old man, the pole on the top of which the aforesaid house stood was considerably aslant—the paint (it had originally been red) was nearly beaten away by the storms of many years, and as it had received no alteration or repairs whatever, it was in the estimation of most persons except the good squire and his wife, a little behind the times. On the spring of the opening of our story, the twain held a consultation as to the propriety of renovating the martin-box a little. Martlet-house was the modern designation of like tenements, but the squire persisted in saying martin-box. The consultation began by the asseveration of Mr. and Mrs. Higgins that the old house was plenty good enough—that as worthy and respectable birds had been born and reared in it as ever had been bred in finer houses, and as for the modern improvements, they were all nonsense, tending to degeneration and effeminacy—therefore it was resolved that the house should be put up to let as it was. Some fresh straw was laid on the floor, and a prop placed against the leaning pole, and this was considered enough to satisfy any reasonable applicants.

They had experienced a good deal of difficulty in letting the old red house for some years past, and this was why the straw was laid down and the prop set up, but as for putting up useless chimnies and painting the house white, which was the modern fashion, the squire would not hear of it. Nevertheless both he and his wife were of the opinion that *their* house ought to bring as high a rent as any house in the neighborhood. Lest the demand should seem exorbitant, they resolved to put certain privileges in the bill, for on looking about they found they could include a hop-vine, three bee-hives and a

peach tree as well as not. So the old red house was advertised as to let for such a sum, *with* the privilege of the hop-pine, bee-hives and peach tree!

Day after day the squire seated himself on the porch next the martin-house, and remained there from twelve till one to receive applicants. Many birds simply glanced at the outside and went away, without so much as asking for the key—a few desired to be shown the house, but one must have larger parlors, another a range, to another a bath was indispensable, and all agreed that the conveniences were by no means equal to the price demanded. “Suppose it is comfortable!” they said, “what is a little red house when big white houses are the fashion?”

Now if they had put the house in thorough repair, and been content with a reasonable compensation, they would have secured a good tenant at an early day no doubt, and to have martins about the yard was the squire's special delight. One day when he had sat the usual time without receiving a single application, he said in a very desponding tone, “I have a great mind to put down the terms a little, Dorothy—why every house in the neighborhood is taken, and a good many nests are made already, I'll warrant you.”

But Dorothy said, “Wait a day or two—if all the houses are taken, so much the better chance for us, and I should not wonder if your very eagerness to let the house was in the way of your doing so—here is the paper—pretend to be reading, and let it not appear that you are sitting here to watch for applicants.”

The squire took the newspaper and unfolded it before him, though he kept his eyes in the air, and Mrs. Higgins went on to say that their house was good enough for any birds, if they only had sense enough to know what they wanted. “And when another bird comes,” she said, “mind what I tell you, and don't appear over-anxious—there is a little fellow now looking at the house!” and she concealed herself behind the door that her concern about the place might not be apparent. She never once thought that craft might be met with craft, and that themselves might fall into their own trap.

The squire bit his lip to keep back the smile when he saw the little martin his wife had

indicated, for he felt at once almost sure of a tenant. He turned over the newspaper and adjusted his spectacles as if for its perusal, but in fact for a closer survey of the inspector of the red house. He was a recently married widower, as the old man conceived, for widower martins have an undefinable manner that betrays their condition, and which they do not drop immediately on marriage, though generally shortly afterward. From his motions he had evidently kept house many a time, and knew how to appreciate the comforts of a home, and had less regard for show than younger and less experienced birds. He seemed to take in the advantages of the place at once, and in the space of a minute had hopped in and hopped out more than a dozen times, besides dashing past the bee-hives, rustling through the hop-vine, and taking a swing on a branch of the peach tree: and all the time his little brown eyes glistened more and more with delight. Once or twice the squire thought he saw his wings quiver as with ecstasy, and he heard him say to himself, "a sung home—a very sung home—better than my first wife ever had," but he continued a little more thoughtfully, "perhaps I had better alight in the main road, and survey the premises from that point of view."

The squire could not see the change that came over his countenance as he took an observation from the new point, and judging from the previous signs of satisfaction, resolved to yield no farthing of his first demand. I said a change came over the face of Mr. Martin as he viewed the tenement from the public road—it did not present a very imposing aspect, and he was uncertain as to the expectations of young Mrs. Martin, or Martlet, as she insisted on being called.

Sailing round in the direction of the squire, who seemed intent on the newspaper, he politely inquired if he were the owner of the red house, for he had wisely resolved to ascertain the terms, and then go home and fetch Mrs. Martlet to decide herself on taking it. Remembering the advice of Dorothy, the squire gave an affirmative nod without so much as looking up. He was apparently absorbed in the newspaper, which, to say truth, he had not read for a month, in his anxiety about renting the house.

But to Mr. Martin his manner was meant to say, and did say, "I am the owner of that very eligible piece of property, sir, but as to letting it, I am quite indifferent about the matter—indeed I rather prefer declining."

A rich man, thought Mr. Martin, to whom the letting of that little house is a small affair—so

I think I had better secure the place without consulting Mrs. Martlet. The independence of the landlord made the red house look more attractive at once—it was late in the season and difficult to get a place at all—besides that was as good a house as he could afford to have, and of course Mrs. Martlet would be reasonable—the first Mrs. Martlet had been.

Still he felt some hesitancy, and bowing very low, inquired whether the refusal of the house would be allowed him for an hour.

The old gentleman gave him a look which seemed to say, he had made the most preposterous request that ever a martin made, and shaking his head with a gravity that intimated the whole world moved with it, he replied, "No, sir, not a minute!"

"If Mrs. Martlet were with me," urged the miserable applicant, but he was interrupted with the haughty remark, that if he wanted the house he could take it, but that no words were to be wasted about it, and at the conclusion the squire turned his chair quite away from the anxious applicant.

"So, ho! I must put on airs too if I would succeed," thought the bird, and dashing almost in the face of the old man, he twittered with an accent slightly foreign, "What are your terms, sir?" and came to the ground for an answer, strutting in a way that indicated terms were little to him if the place suited. He could not, however, forbear drawing his eyebrows up when the squire coolly replied, that his terms were ten thousand songs a month.

"Very high," said the martlet, and in spite of himself his tail dropt slightly.

But the squire replies, that considering the advantages the terms are low. "The neighborhood," he says, "is most desirable, affording the best society—that his house includes the privileges of the hop-vine and peach tree, together with the bees, and that his tenants will witness the swarming without extra charge—and I am sure," he continues, "nothing can exceed the beauty of the landscape, which embraces two barns, a haystack, a pretty turn of the road, together with my own residence and the western extremity of my henroost!"

"Not less than ten thousand?" asks the martin, and he stretches his neck forward to catch the squire's answer, for he is getting more and more troubled and bewildered, from the fact that he don't know what Mrs. Martlet will think.

Why he did not know more of her character before marriage was his own affair, not ours. The squire is evidently bored, and answers, "not a song less!" and he proceeds to say he

would not let the red house at all, but for the sake of being saved the annoyance of continual applications, and that it will not be let on any terms except to a genteel family without children; and one that comes well recommended, and engages neither to hang out a sign, nor to keep boarders: and rising, he wished his troublesome applicant good evening.

The martin makes a zig-zag, as if at all hazards he must ascertain the expectations of his wife, but seeing a new house-hunter alight in the yard, he blindly hurries toward the landlord, and just as he is disappearing within the door tells him to take down the bill.

"What references have you?" demands that person, in a most consequential manner.

The widower says he is but a new-comer to the neighborhood—his wife and mother-in-law are at present the occupants of Gen. Loft's new house, and he mentions incidentally their connection with a French family of great distinction. He regrets that he is personally unknown thereabouts, but mentions a number of great names at a distance, if the squire will be at the trouble of addressing them.

"Very well, sir," said the squire, his face fairly breaking into smiles before the applicant was gone, and stepping into the house, he continued, "well, Dorothy, I've got the confounded old house off at last, and for twice as much as it is worth! I think the fellow will repent, but what is that to me?—he had his eyes open and saw what he was to get, and knew what ten thousand a month was, I suppose—his wife can help him, or they can manage some way. And don't you think, Dorothy," he continued, "they belong to the great family of French Martlets, and are doubtless rich as they can be, and the music, I expect, will be superior to anything that has been heard hereabouts."

That was a happy night to Squire Higgins and his wife—they would have such pleasant times hearing the birds sing, for they liked the music of martins, both of them, and these were no common birds, but real French Martlets!

Mrs. Higgins almost felt as if she could wear her "store frock" every day, and the squire actually put ribbon shoe-strings in his shoes, on the strength of the excellent bargain he had made. A nice bed of roses they had heaped, as they thought, but they saw not that the thorns were beneath the thin leaves, and would soon come through and pierce them, and their dissimulation return to plague the inventors. Pretty shrewd people they were, but they had yet to learn that they could not be just themselves without also being just to their neighbors.

A widower with a young wife! Ah, she will be the old bird's darling, for a year at least, they said, and consequently a charming neighbor—we will have a lawyer in the morning and the little Frenchman made fast enough, for they resolved to make no inquiry into the references, almost immediately.

Having directed the bill to be taken down, Mr. Martlet felt an uncomfortable sensation, as of a coming event casting its shadow before, and perching on the ridge of Squire Higgins' barn, he surveyed the prospect in general, and his late movement in particular. He was not quite confident of a favorable reception on the part of Mrs. Martlet, of the news he had to convey to her—she lived stylishly with her mother, and belonged to a rich family of French Martlets, so she had told him; she insisted on having the name called *marilet*, it was not to be confounded with the vulgar martins among whom they lived, she said.

"Whew!" said the mother-in-law, "just as if our complexion and accent did not attest our origin."

Sad misgivings passed through the mind of Mr. Martin as he sat on the ridge of the barn-roof—he knew his mother-in-law was exceeding proud and haughty, and that his wife was spirited he had some reason to believe—he had supposed they were rich, but on that point he was not perfectly advised—he had accidentally met his wife at a watering-place, and after three hours' courtship had proposed and been accepted. His mother-in-law had immediately thereafter taken Gen. Loft's fine new house and given a brilliant entertainment; and, if he could judge from recent indications, she was about to throw aside her weeds and re-enter the state of conjugal felicity. She had more than intimated her desire to have the young people provide for themselves. And leaving Mr. Martin to such reflections as under the circumstances would naturally arise to his mind, we will turn to the dwelling of the bride and mother.

A fine old place was Gen. Loft's, and a fine bird house he had, to be sure—the gardens, and fountains, and flowers, and everything about it was pleasant as pleasant could be.

The shadows of evening are falling, and the young wife has been expecting the husband for an hour—she is sitting at the window in no very amiable mood, because she is sure he might come if he would. Some wives would have been fearful lest an accident prevented the return of the beloved—not so she—there were no tears in her eyes, and no tremor in her nerves—it was not at all likely in her calm and cold survey that her

husband, who went forth well and strong two hours before, had been seized with the cholera or overtaken by robbers—it seemed much more likely to her clear survey that he had met some old orony, and was passing the time in a wayside chat, or that he was taking tea with some one of his lady friends—at this last thought she looked positively mad—and so ugly her husband would scarcely know her if he were suddenly to come in—and why should she not look as she feels, and feel as she pleases? She has been married two weeks, and her mother (just now on the roof of the house talking with a very dear friend) has told her repeatedly that if ever she is to have any privileges like other wives, it is time she had them. Suddenly she rises and shuts the window with a slam, exclaiming aloud, “really this is too bad, I'll not watch any longer—he may stay away forever, for all I care! I could have taken forty houses!”

“What, my dear?” calls the mother, from the roof of the house—“pray, excuse me, my sweet friend, till I see what my daughter says,” and with a bewitching look she flutters down to the window, and in a tone which none of her friends would recognize, exclaims, “What in the name of sense keeps that old fool, your husband, so long away—the supper will be spoiled, and I shall be ashamed to have our visitor partake of it.”

“What did you insist on his remaining for?” asks the bride, “he has been here all the afternoon now, and beside that you have been together every day for the last month—do for decency's sake come in the house and make your courtship, at any rate.”

“It's none of your business where I court, nor when!” answers the mother—“I reckon I will do as I please in my own house—I only wish you and that stupid wretch you have married, had one of your own, for ever since you have been big enough to speak, you have been a torment to me!”

“Mercy knows you can't be so glad to have me away, as I am to go,” answers the bride, sharply, and the gentleman on the roof drops down at the door and says, “I think, ladies, I must wish you a good evening.”

The bride nods her head and waves her wing gracefully by way of adieu—she is so intent on watching for her husband she scarcely notices the stranger, but the mother exclaims with more than her customary sweetness, “my dear sir, I will not hear one word of your going—I have promised myself the pleasure of drinking tea with you, and I am sure you can't disappoint me.” So winning, and so appealing is her manner

that the visitor says he will take a turn around the grounds and be with them presently.

“Mercy! mother, what did you insist on his eating with us for—we have not enough for ourselves, you know,” says the bride, dashing backward and forward through the house.

“Shut up your mouth, or I will box your ears!” replies the mother—“I want him to go as badly as you, but I must be civil—you ought to have sense enough to try to make things seem more and better than they are—I am sure I have tried hard enough to teach you!”

“I wish all the feathers would drop out of your wings,” cries the bride, “you are the hatefullest old bird I ever seen, if you are my mother!”

“Another word and I'll pick your eyes out!” rejoins the widow, making a sudden dash at her daughter. As she does so the visitor appears. “Ah, my dear friend,” she says in her very sweetest coo, “I was just going in search of you. We won't wait one minute longer, shall we, sweetie? I expect sonny has had a long, hard search, poor boy.” This last was addressed aloud to her daughter, and approaching the door she affected to give one anxious look, and putting down her head as though she whispered some word of consolation to her troubled daughter, she gave her a sharp peck in the cheek, and added aloud, “come, my dear, let us sit down at once—perhaps sonny will drink tea with some one of his many friends.”

The bride smiled, and scratching her mother under the table they sat down together. The widow had not the least appetite, *she said*, but nothing gave her so much pleasure as to see her friends eat heartily—if her visitor did not accept everything she offered she would really feel offended. “My dear daughter,” she would say, “do let me help you to a little of this, and this,” shaking her head at the same time, or thrusting her elbow into the side of the young lady.

“My dear madam,” said the guest, “how can you part with that lovely daughter?”

“Don't mention it, pray,” she replied, “don't let me see the dreadful truth so long as it can be kept off—we lived together so sweetly here—I really think I have a very naughty sonny to deprive me of my jewel, and here he comes, naughty little man:” and rising from the table she flew to meet him, as though her affectionate heart would not be restrained. It was not, however, pure love that prompted her action—she wished to say to him that he must pretend to have taken tea from home; inasmuch as there was not a mouthful in the house with which to replenish the table, and the guest had eaten all before him.

This went hard with the bridegroom, and he muttered something aside that sounded like a protest against having to live upon love; the bride gave him a look that seemed to say, "scratch for yourself, old fellow—little do I care whether you have had supper or not, leaving me two whole hours to amuse myself!"

The widow was quick to understand the glance and the muttering, and laughingly proposed to her visitor a trip to the barn for the sake of the air, and besides, the sentiment of lovers was such a bore, she said.

"Well, bridy," said the new-comer, when they were quite alone, "I have taken a house at last," and he sidled toward her with intent of saying how his affairs stood, and that the house was not so good as he wished, but as good as he was able to have.

But her reply was a very cold "indeed, sir," so that for sometime he remained silent. The bride was silent, too, and dropt her head under her wing as though she were not able to talk.

"What is the matter, my dear?" ventured the bridegroom, at length. She replied that her head ached badly, and impliedly blamed him for it, inasmuch as she said it had been brought on by watching for him.

The husband said he was sorry; but he did not believe she had a headache, and being a good deal hungry, and a little displeased, said no more, but complained of being tired and went to bed. Peeping from beneath her wing, the bride discovered that he was gone, and fluttered out of the house, saying between her teeth, "I'll show him if that is the way he is going to treat me." But what could she do? She and her mother were not on very amicable terms, as has been seen—she had as yet made no confidant—so, after a brief cry to herself, she picked up a nice supper of bugs and flew up to the roost, resolved to bide her time.

In the morning the widow was astir betimes. She would have the young folks out of her house, that she was determined on—for be it known to you, oh, reader, in confidence, she was about to get married, and wanted sole possession of the roost.

The moving was a terrible time, to be sure—the bride was still indisposed—perhaps on account of the fear she entertained that the new home would not be so stylish as the old one—indeed she would not have budged the whole day, but that her mother fairly picked her out of the house. There was in fact a general quarrel among them—the mother asserting that she was tired of seeing the faces of the young people, and that if they ever meant to begin housekeeping

for themselves it was time, and the daughter recriminating upon her that the match was of *her* making, and it was but fair she should give them house room. Indeed the quarrel rose to such a pitch that the poor husband was fain to take his wife on his back and sail off as best he could.

"Dear widow Martlet," said a bird, who chanced to be passing by shortly after the son-in-law had departed—"what is the matter? any thing new?"

The widow said no, (very mournfully) except that her sweet daughter had just left her, and it seemed to open afresh the old fountain of her grief.

"You must not mourn so, my friend," said the consoling bird, "your tears can't bring back the dead, you know—and as for your daughter, she has not removed from the neighborhood, I hope."

The widow choked down her anger and mortification at the little red house, though it was better than she had ever lived in till now, and said in the sweetest tone possible, that she could not consent to have her dear children far from her, and that for the sake of being near her, they had, for the present, taken Squire Higgins' house—her daughter was like herself, she said, and thought little of exteriors, keeping all things subordinate to the affections.

The consoler bird had duties at home, and presently took leave of the widow with a kiss, and thinking what a sweet, sorrowful creature she was.

That very day the visitor of the previous evening and the mournful widow were joined in the bands of matrimony. So much for outward appearances among birds!

Meantime there was a great deal of talk and gossip among the martins of the neighborhood—there had been a fine wedding party, and there always will be talk and gossip among martins on occasions of the kind—it was reported that the clergyman who officiated at the nuptials, received a piece of gold as big as Gen. Lofty's house for his services, and there was no counting the shining tail feathers, diamonds top-knots, silver ladles, &c., bestowed on the bride upon that most interesting occasion.

The widow Martin or Martlet, as she now called herself, had but that spring returned and taken the finest house in the neighborhood, after a year's absence, during which she reported herself as having been travelling in foreign parts, for the completion of her daughter's education. That she went away with a husband, and very poor, and had come back a rich widow, was all that was really known—everybody had their own

thoughts—martins always will have their own thoughts, but it was generally believed that the rich relatives she had met abroad had bestowed upon her much gold—it was variously estimated to be from five thousand quarts to twenty million barrels!

Of course the widow was exceedingly popular, the brightness of the twenty million barrels of gold might perhaps have reflected back upon her—certain it is, her manifold excellencies shone out with greater lustre than formerly.

All the birds said they had always known what a sweet, modest, generous, self-sacrificing creature the widow was, but in some way it had happened that they had never spoken it! She was handsome too, but for her constant mourning for her poor husband who had died on their travels—they all pitied her so, and many of them spent their last sixpence to buy some little delicacy which it was possible she might like.

But who can rightly understand what is in the hearts of martins from the houses they live in, or in fact from what they say? That the bride was beautiful was generally conceded, and that she had done nothing all her life but oil her feathers was plainly to be seen—the great wonder was that she should leave so sweet a mother, and so fine a house for a poor, plain widower—they could account for it in no way, but that there was no accounting for the predilections—moreover it was supposed that she had money enough, and cared not whether or not her husband were rich—as to the little red house, it was evidently taken for the sake of being near the mother, and rich people were likely to be above small pride.

A few of the young ladies thought the widower had been singularly blind to the attractions of certain young ladies they knew, and that to have married a lady he had known a little longer would have been as wise—they did not mean themselves any of them—of course not.

But to return to the tenants of Squire Higgins as they appeared in their own house. No sooner were they gotten there than the wife, who had been hitherto only sulky, found a voice and began to scold. It was a pretty-looking place to bring a bride, and from such an own mother's house as she had come from—why did her husband not tell her what a mean old house he had taken, so at least she might in some sort have prepared her feelings.

"Because you were angry," he replied, "and would not listen to me."

"That is false," says the wife, "I was sick and my feelings were hurt, but you are a cruel, ungrateful husband," and she begins to cry.

"Ungrateful!" he replies, "I did not see any thing to be especially grateful for last night," for he has not forgotten going supperless to bed, and martins are apt to retort upon their wives for wilful neglect.

"What are you to give for the place? at any price it would be dear," said the wife, not heeding the last remark of her husband.

He was by this time in no mood to soften matters, and replied without evasion, "ten thousand songs a month, madam, for the house, and the privilege of the hop-vine, peach tree and bee-hives."

The wife lifted up her wings in astonishment, and having made the exclamation, "I did not think you were quite such a fool!" dropt down in one corner of the room in what seemed to the husband a swoon, for he had never seen a fit of that nature before.

Under the circumstances what could he do but bill and coo a little? When the lady wife recovered sufficiently to speak, she declared that for her part she would never go near the hop-vine nor the peach tree, and that the swarming of the bees would perfectly distract her, and as for the ten thousand songs, she would never open her mouth to sing one of them—her mate might pay the rent the best way he could—she had not been consulted, and she would not be responsible.

Such a din as she made almost deafened the miserable husband, and he was fain to say he had made a bad bargain, and that he would never ask her to swing with him on the peach tree or the hop-vine, and that furthermore he would watch the bees, and when they gave indications of swarming, he would carry her on his back out of hearing.

"And now, my dear," he concluded, "shan't we go forth and pick our meal together?"

But the wife said she did not feel as if she could walk one step—"Not if I take your wing under mine?" asked the husband, fondly.

No, it was quite impossible. "Shall I take you on my back, my dear?" he urged.

No, she did not think she could be moved at all.

So the poor fellow went forth to pick his own meal, and something for his wife into the bargain.

Pretty accurately the little bird could calculate how long her husband would be absent, for she was used to picking, and as soon as he was well out of view, she flew forth and snuffed the sweetness of the hop-vine, took a swing on the peach tree, and alighting by the bee-hives picked up a leg or two of the dead bees in her way, and sweetened her bill with a little of the honeycomb. She was about returning home, when glancing

stealthily about, she espied a handsome young bird on the gable of the old squire's house; and whether she fancied he looked better than her husband, and that a match might have been possible under other circumstances, I don't know, for it is a difficult thing to tell what birds think, sometimes, but certain it is that she perched on the roof of her own house, and twittered one of the merriest and most coquettish songs she had ever sung—and furthermore it is certain that if such evil and unfaithful thoughts did come into her head, she herself had met temptation, and if she had been picking her meal with her husband, as she should have been, the accident would not have happened.

She did not seem to regard it as an unfortunate accident herself; at all events, she appeared better and livelier on her husband's return, and ate the food he brought her with great relish. Of course he was delighted, and they passed the night amicably.

But domestic happiness will not stay among birds unless both shut their wings upon it—one may try ever so hard, but all in vain, and there was little oneness of mind betwixt the birds I write of, I am afraid. Whether it was from seeing the bright bird on the gable, I know not, but the morning afterward the wife thought the plumage of her husband unusually dull, and ventured to hint as much.

"Very true," he replied, "I am neither young nor handsome, but I love you as well as though I were, and perhaps you will spare me a little oil now and then."

"Spare you oil, indeed! a modest request, to be sure; I don't expect to have more oil than I shall want for my own feathers, and if I had, I would not waste it upon your old dull coat—I never saw a dress fade as yours has since we were married."

She did not look beneath the dress, I am afraid, or she would have seen a heart willing to do the best it could, but unfortunately for her, she was a bird whose eyes could not very well see through feathers.

After contemplating his dull coat a few minutes in a very happy mood, as may be supposed, the husband suggested the propriety of setting about nest building.

"I am not well enough to fly out," said the wife, "and if you had my feeling you could see it, unless you are so old you are blind!"

The little husband drew himself up, and replied that he was not quite so blind as he *had* been, and turning his head on one side, he looked at the lady bird as though she were so little and mean he could hardly see her.

"I'll teach you to look at me!" she screamed, and pouncing at him gave him such a pick in the head as brought the blood.

"I wish I had never seen you," he said, in a tone of deadly anger, and putting on his hat he went out of the house without intimating where he was going, or what after.

"I am not going to stay in this dismal old house, and alone and sick, see if I am," said the spirited lady, and concealing her eyes with a veil she set off for her mother's, and there related all her trials and sufferings, crying all the while, as was natural for an injured wife to do. Of course the mother could only see that her daughter was all right, and her daughter's husband all wrong, as was quite natural to a mother under the circumstances; and when she had very judiciously comforted her darling by putting her nicely in bed, and feeding her with all the delicacies of the house, she told her, as was very right and proper, that while *she* lived and had a house for her to come to, she would not see her abused—she would see that her husband treated her as a daughter of hers had a right to be treated, and furthermore, she advised that the wife should not stir one inch till the tyrannical wretch, her husband, came for her, and carried her home on his back—what else was a husband's back for?

And here the two ladies made themselves very funny about the dull, faded coat of the poor husband, and moreover, they had both discovered, much about the same time, that he had monstrous ugly feet and big eyes!

"Now don't you stir one foot toward home," was the parting advice of the mother, as she left the side of her daughter for a few minutes, to attend her household affairs. "And when the ugly fellow comes after you, I'll teach him his duty toward you! There is nothing for a married bird like getting her mother to help her in all little troubles."

Now when Mr. Martin went forth from his house it was without any definite object, and having perched in the farther cave of the barn, and calmly thought the matter all over, he did not see, that, under the circumstances, he could do better than return to the house, make peace with his wife, and build a nest like other people. On returning, as the reader knows, he found his house empty—his wife had gone and made no sign. We can judge but very imperfectly of the feelings of a bird under such circumstances, but the supposition is, they were not happyfying.

At first he dashed himself down as if in despair, and finding, seemingly, no relief, got up again, and with a sort of wild envy set to work

gathering material for a nest. Not thinking of what he was about, it happened that he often picked the wrong article, for neither birds nor men can work with good result while their heart is distracted.

He had soon quite a quantity together, but perhaps his wife would never return to build the nest, so what was the use; and so much did this thought weigh upon him, that he finally abandoned the nest-making. He was constantly annoyed, too, by the dropping in of visitors to inquire how they were getting on, and when it would be agreeable to himself and Mrs. Martlet to drink tea with them.

"They will think it strange," thought he, "to see me at work alone," so he forced spirits and said, "Mrs. Martlet would regret not seeing them—she had just dropt in at her mother's for a moment, and he was *amusing* himself with work in her absence," and in truth I don't see what better a bird could have said, under the circumstances. Nevertheless, he did not satisfy himself nor his visitors—he fancied they would discover his deception in some way, for there is an atmosphere of discomfort in an unhappy bird house that makes itself felt.

So he left working, more and more irritated and pained; and full of curiosity, and a little touched with sympathy, the callers one after another flew home, saying, "poor Mr. Martin!"

Hour after hour went by, and poor Mr. Martin worried them through, doing a little of everything, but nothing effectually. Sometimes he went up to the roof and tried to sing by way of making Squire Higgins' payment, but his throat was out of tune, for a bird can't sing when his wife has run away in anger. He saw night coming, but not his mate—he saw no other way but that he must go in search of her, for birds are afraid of scenes, and will sometimes do things against their inclinations to prevent occasion for it. So having prepared supper and swept out the house, and made all tidy and comfortable as he could, he bent his wing in the direction of his mother-in-law's house.

We leave the scene of his arrival to be imagined. Suffice it that he agreed to the mother bird's requisitions, and it may be supposed they demanded a good deal; and so soon as the shades of night began to deepen, so that he might not be mortified by being seen by any of his friends, flew home with his wife on his back. Now it happened that not a few of the industrious, hard-working martins were out late gathering stuff for nests, so the newly-married pair were seen and recognized in spite of their caution, and the scandal was aggravated by the fact that it was

dark, for it showed that they were ashamed, as they would not have been, if there had been any just cause for the husband to carry his wife.

In vain Mr. Martlet said he did not care, and in vain Mrs. Martlet said she did not care—both did care, and for a few days thereafter jogged along with no outward indication of the quarrels in-doors.

Sometimes they took their meals together, and sometimes apart—Mrs. Martlet threw away half the material brought for the nest, often asserting that she did not care whether she had any nest at all or not, poking her husband when he displeased her, and threatening once an hour to go home to her mother and remain there.

In such infelicity as this a rude nest was completed. Having laid the eggs, the wife said she had done her part and would not sit, upon which the husband agreed to sit one half the time, greatly against his free will, but what else could he do under the circumstances?

During the incubation Mrs. Martlet was unusually sullen and exacting—while her husband kept the nest she flew about swinging on the peach tree and the hop-vine, and visiting the bees now and then; and sometimes it happened that she saw the handsome stranger previously mentioned.

He was really a beautiful bird, and perhaps her glances expressed her admiration, for the young stranger came often that way, and by degrees there grew a friendship up between them. He did not scruple to express high esteem and regard for the lady-bird, and in terms so warm that more was implied than spoken—she looked so like a sister of his—he felt drawn toward her, he said, and now and then he perched on the old gable, and boldly sang a love ditty when the lady was out of view, but in hearing. It was not meant for anybody in particular, he said to himself, and songs did not mean anything. The husband, however, did not like the stranger, and by signs which birds know how to interpret, showed him that he had best make his visits a little less frequent.

One day when the lady saw her husband fix his sharp eyes on the bright coat of the stranger as though he would claw it to pieces, she called him to come and sit right down beside her—not another minute would she sit on the nest unless he kept by her side—she had not made one call since she was married without finding the husband close by the nest side—she was so lonesome and so tried, he must stay and talk with her; but subterfuges can't be resorted to long amongst birds without danger of discovery, and the husband soon suspected that it was not his wife's

love that induced her demand; beside, it was absolutely requisite that he should go abroad for meat and drink. It is not improbable that he was glad to escape from her presence, for she scolded and picked him constantly when he was within her reach.

Finding that he would go forth, the wife said he must return by such an hour, or she would positively leave the nest and let the eggs go to ruin.

"I will return, if possible," said the husband, and flew forth—certainly with the intention of being prompt.

He met such little detentions, however, as birds will meet with, and on looking at his watch found that the time was nearly expired: and with a nice titbit in his mouth, flew with all his might toward home. Suddenly his wings dropt—could he believe his eyes, and was that his wife swinging on the peach tree with the bright-coated stranger? Yes, it was true, and she was chirping in her sweetest tone—for a moment he stops, and with ruffled feathers seems to be clutching at his dagger, for he fancies the stranger means himself when he hears him say of some bird, "he is a cross old fellow and don't deserve to have a mate," and such other broken sentences as "gone a whole half hour! I can hardly believe it." And when he adds that "to watch at the nest side of so sweet a bird would be esteemed the most blessed privilege of his life," the widower feels that the sweet bird alluded to is his wife—it may not be, but such is his impression, and when she answers, "believe me, all married birds are tyrants," he can endure it no longer, and pouncing upon the bright-coated intruder, he gives him such a thrust in the side as sends him whizzing to the ground, and seizing his wife by the wing, leads her home in a hurry. High words ensue—the husband denouncing his wife as alike regardless of private virtue and public censure—a pretty story, he says, if she is not to be trusted while he goes out for a meal—he wants and will have no faithless wife. And when she replies that she was simply exchanging compliments with a neighbor, and taking a mouthful of air after a weary sitting for his sake—he replies gravely and loftily that his wife "must not even be suspected!"

He will have obedience; he will have new regulations of some sort—he won't and can't live any longer as he is living.

Mrs. Martlet asseverates that she sat for a whole half minute longer than the time agreed on, and that she will not be imposed on by any bird—much less an old, ugly one—she has a mother's house to go to, and she will go there, and stay there too, if such a fuss is to be made

every time she speaks civilly to a friend—she would as soon be dead at once as have the eyes of a jealous husband on her every moment of her life—she is actually afraid to look out of the window, and she sneeringly advises her husband to arm himself with a revolver and tie himself to her apron-string, lest she should say how do you do? to some man upon some occasion, and he not hear what she said.

But enough that they quarreled till the eggs were addled, seeing which they quarreled about that till it was night and bed-time. Mr. Martlet retired first, and so disposed himself as to leave no room for his wife, who, after having a *good cry*, took her silver spoons beneath her wing, and through the night and alone, made her way to her mother's.

All that was said and done need not be recorded—at the end of a week of estrangement, however, the unhappy parties were brought together—a lawyer was called, and arrangements effected providing a maintenance and separate apartments for the wife, together with some other liberties which she considered essential to her happiness. It was the fashion among French martlets, she said, for husbands and wives to see as little of one another as possible.

So the pair returned to the red house—the husband hiring a coach and six cats for the conveyance of his wife thither, and neither speaking to the other during the drive. It looked well to do, however, and all the birds that saw them said, "how happy they must be!"

How the new regulations succeeded is not known, for one morning, about a week after the quarrel, the old squire might have been heard to say, after shading his eyes long with his hand and gazing at the bird house, "Dorothy, I believe in my heart the French martins are gone—tail and top-knot—deuce take them!"

And sure enough he was right, Gen. Lofty's house was deserted at the same time, and where and why the French martlets were gone, was for a while the wonder of the neighborhood.

Rumors most unfavorable to their characters were, however, soon afloat; for much about the time of their disappearance, an old blind bird came into the neighborhood, who professed to be the husband of the bird who had called herself a widow, and furthermore, he stated, that, while living in a neighborhood not many miles distant, where as he said they had been they last year—and not travelling abroad, as themselves had reported, his wife and daughter had actually picked his eyes out and deserted him in the most cruel manner, after having all his life treated him in the unkindest way that ever in the world a

husband and father was treated. He was taken up for dead, he said, and nursed by a good bird, who had perhaps never been heard of out of her own house, and having recovered contrary to his desire, had resolved to follow his wife and demand some provision for his old age, having heard that she was married to a retired gambler who was rich; but on presenting himself, both wife and daughter disowned and turned him out of doors, upon which he was forced to make his story known to strangers, and solicit charity. "Their flight," he said, "was a sufficient proof of their dishonesty."

Some of those who heard credited the story—among them the *friend* of the young Mrs. Martlet, who had been wont to sing love-songs on the gable of the old squire's house. Indeed he was loudest in his denunciations, and clapt his bright wings in glee over every imputation of her faithlessness and immodesty. The neighborhood ought to publicly rejoice that it was rid of her, and often winking one eye intimated that he might tell most astounding things, were it not that he hated scandal.

Some few old birds professed to recognize the blind one and to verify his story, but the majority believed him an imposter, and would not entertain, or in any way assist or comfort him. In their

opinion the French martlets were the sweetest and most injured people in the world—persecuted out of house and home, indeed, by a miserable old vagabond, and the credulity of a parcel of gossips. So one half the people lamented their departure, while the other half denounced them as the wickedest and most infamous wretches in the world. If it be with birds as with men, I suspect the truth lay between the two extremes.

It is certain that Squire Higgins never received the exorbitant rent he expected, not a tithe of it, and that the red house stood vacant till the next year, when another consultation with Dorothy was held, and it was resolved to put the old place in thorough repair as the likeliest means of securing a good tenant at an early day. They further concluded to ask about what the house was worth, and say nothing of the privileges of the hop-vine, peach tree and bee-hives, and to let it to any respectable applicant, even though he should have a dozen children, or propose to keep boarders.

"The golden rule is the best, after all," said the squire, wiping his spectacles as he looked at the freshly painted house, "but mind, Dorothy," he concluded, "if any French martlets come about, that you treat them just as coolly as that rule will admit of."

THE CALICO BALL-DRESS.

BY A. L. OTIS.

OUR hero, Mr. Hampton, who was largely engaged in the manufacture of iron, was last winter obliged to discharge many of his hands, and for a time to stop work altogether, as with the slack demand for the article he manufactured, he could not meet his expenses.

The despairing entreaties of some of his best workmen, who had been with him for years, for any kind of employment, led Mr. Hampton to think deeply, and use every exertion to relieve in part the misery he had been compelled by necessity to inflict.

Among those whose welfare he made especially his care, was the family of his foreman, which consisted of a wife and nine children, the eldest of whom a tall and fine-looking girl of sixteen years, was a seamstress, and thankful for work at the usual low rates. But he had not only charged himself with the care of this family, there were at least twenty others belonging to his workmen who looked to him for assistance. It may well be imagined that with so many dependants he was often at a loss, even with the aid of soup societies and church charities, to find wherewithal to feed them, warm them, house them, and keep them clothed.

Among his friends was Mrs. Bellington, the enviable mother of six young daughters; the eldest, Emily, being only seventeen years of age. Emily was very beautiful so far as external beauty goes—tall, very fair, with jet black hair, blue eyes, and a proudly, graceful carriage. She was to "come out" this winter.

Filled with the one subject of his thoughts, Mr. Hampton did not fail to make it the theme of conversation in the motherly presence of Mrs. Bellington, who always took much interest in Mr. Hampton's plans. She made him her almoner, and it was necessary that he should discuss his projects at her house. Emily listened to his tales of poverty with deep attention, and Mr. Hampton learned to expect the warm glance of sympathy from those blue eyes, which whether for the poor or not, looked lovely and genuine.

Mr. Hampton, one evening, was asked, by Mrs. Bellington, to go to a calico ball.

"Combining duty with pleasure! benevolence with self-gratification! The rich must have pleasures, and it is true charity to make them

thus minister to the wants of the poor." So reasoned Mrs. Bellington.

The receipts from the sale of tickets were to be given to the poor, together with all the dresses worn by ladies and gentlemen on that occasion.

"And then, Mr. Hampton, it will be our sweet Emily's first ball. How touching to have her begin her life in the world, thus sacrificing all the vanities of dress for the sake of the poor."

Mr. Hampton was persuaded the plan was a good one, and he longed to see Emily at her first ball, so he made arrangements to go. His object being much more charitable than self-sacrificing, he purchased for the occasion a strong, thick suit of clothes, considerably too wide for elegance, but excellent for working in, and looked, when dressed, like a handsome, stalwart carpenter or mason. Quite satisfied with himself, he called according to agreement for Mrs. Bellington and Emily.

The ladies were dressed and muffled in opera cloaks. Emily looked out from her white vapor-like nubie as pretty as a Venus emerging from her natal sea-foam. Mr. Hampton's one glance was enough to bewilder him, and make him feel as they rode along in the dark an exquisite, mysterious sense of the beauty living, breathing so near him.

When the ladies rejoined him before entering the ball-room, Emily—though she had lost with her nubie the little cloud of mystery which had so enhanced her charms—certainly looked like a "perfect beauty" in a proud and happy mood.

Mr. Hampton's eyes rested upon her, taking admiring note of each charming particular—of her dark curls turned back from her delicately tinted young cheek, and showing the bottom of an ear so white as to look like a pearl in the shadow of her hair. Her blue dress was charming in its simplicity, and Mr. Hampton, forgetting its future destination, did not observe that though it was of cotton, it was of a texture so fine, and a color so delicate, that it could hardly be called calico. A garland made of a raw heath, the tiny white bells of which hung in such profusion as almost to conceal the fine feathery foliage, shone above those dark curls, and made an airy crown for her graceful head. It seemed the perfection of a head-dress, and he

never thought that at this charity ball Emily was to be decorated with flowers almost as precious as gems, and which would perish in doing credit to her taste. With a glance that dared not dwell upon the beauty before him, he also perceived the exquisite form and snowy hue of the neck and arms.

In fact, he was bewitched, and unconsciously indulged in a long, wrapt gaze, which Emily's conscious blush and drooped eyelids showed she felt and understood. Mrs. Bellington looked at him meanwhile with eyebrows archly raised, and a smile of satisfaction upon her countenance.

He felt the proudest man that walked the earth as Emily leaned upon his arm in entering the ball-room, while her mother followed with a friend. Yes, *he*, the sensible, not very young philanthropist, was proud of the incarnated folly and vanity which made so beautiful a show—and she of whom he was so proud, was even now blushing with annoyance because he wore so inelegant a coat!

All seemed satisfied with themselves, and in the best of spirits, as if virtue were bringing its own reward. The dancing was never more light-hearted. If a few were disposed to laugh at some of the costumes chosen for the poor, they did not say so to the wearers, and all went on prosperously until the leader of ton arrived, and as the whispers went around all eyes turned to her. Thus many a cheek glowed with disappointment, many a glance fell uneasily upon the wearer's dress, many a person felt self-convicted of silliness. For the beauty, the heiress, the belle of the city wore a stout, high-necked, dark calico dress, and as just self-adornment was not forgotten while charity was remembered, the dress was so becoming as to enhance the beauty both of face and form of the wearer.

After greeting the hostess, Miss Clare cast a glance around, and an irresistible smile stole over her face. That smile Mr. Hampton saw and read. A glance at Emily's finery brought the vivid blush of shame to his cheek. Many times he examined Miss Clare's dress as if to find some incongruity there that would excuse Emily. He could see nothing to cavil at but the perfection of the fit.

"No poor work-woman has such a superb form," he thought. But Miss Clare was above the middle size, and he could not deny that many a work-woman might wear that dress with comfort.

While still ruminating in displeased mood on Emily's want of sense in her dress, he perceived that Miss Clare wished to speak to him, and making his way to her side he bowed, while she said laughingly,

"Do keep me in countenance! My calico is only not ashamed to be seen near your coat."

"Your calico has less cause for shame than many here," Hampton answered, somewhat bitterly.

"But I ought to be most heartily ashamed of my want of tact. Only think of my setting up for a 'Charity,' and making my dark gown a rebuke to the assembly! But you have erred likewise. We must be friends and bear one another out."

"I think we have acted only according to agreement, and to what was the design of the ball. How do you think poor, freezing people will feel in those flimsy half-dresses?"

"Oh, the money from the tickets is the main object, and this calico plan was doubtless to make the ball take the fancy, and to give good folks a charitable reason for indulging in a little pleasure. All the dresses worn to-night which are unsuitable, will perhaps be laid aside and others substituted. I might have done so too, and not made a show of my charity. But now that it is done, I intend to bear it out bravely, and who knows but what we may set the fashion for the next ball?"

Mr. Hampton and Miss Clare, after a long conversation, danced together, and Mrs. Bellington bit her lip as she watched them. She began to fear that in making Emily's personal beauty her chief attraction she had erred, and that perhaps it would have been better to have made some display of the goodness of her heart. While cogitating how to show off Emily in another light her carriage came, and she departed with Emily and Mr. Hampton, whose knowledge of the character of both mother and daughter was considerably increased by their attempts to place Miss Clare's conduct in a ridiculous light, and generally to detract from her character as they rode home.

The next morning a package arrived at his house. It contained the dresses worn by Emily and Mrs. Bellington the previous evening, together with some substantial calico, not made up, and a note requesting him to dispose of them as he thought best.

Mr. Hampton—after mentally dressing up each of his pensioners in the blue, short-sleeved dress, only restrained from laughter by his disappointment in Emily, and his regret at the folly of woman-kind in general—finally thought of one whom he thought the dress might fit, and he immediately sent it to Lucy, his foreman's daughter.

In the evening of the same day he visited her father's house. When he knocked, a little child

hastily opened the door which entered their sitting-room, and he beheld Lucy standing before the glass arrayed in the blue dress, just shaking down her golden hair, and laughing with girlish joy to see how pretty she looked. Mr. Hampton had seen her face in the glass, and caught its expression before she saw him entering the opening door. It gave him a pang of anxiety to see that usually modest, sensible girl so taken up with her finery, that even the presence of a stranger could not distract her dazzled eyes from her unwontedly pretty reflection.

His fears were well grounded. He called one evening about a week afterward and found her mother in tears. She said Lucy had gone with some good-for-nothing beau to a ball, and she was sure ill would come of it. Lucy must show herself off in her fine gown. It was *that* put it into her head to go. She never thought of such a thing before, and she wouldn't have got to go now if her father had not been away. She would take no counsel from *her*. What would be the end of it? With her pretty face and her foolishness, and the wicked who lie in wait at these balls, she would be sure to fall into some snare.

Mr. Hampton comforted the mother, and went away with a heart angry at the folly of both rich and poor. He found on his return home a note awaiting him from Miss Clare. It informed him that his little protegee Lucy had gone with that lady's coachman to a very disreputable ball, and begged him to see her safely home from it, as the coachman would certainly become intoxicated, and be no fit protector for her. A jealous

servant had betrayed him to Miss Clare, and she lost no time in doing what she could to save the young girl from harm or annoyance.

"At least there is one right-minded, warm-hearted woman in the world," said Mr. Hampton, hopefully, after reading the note.

He instantly repaired to the ball-room, and rescued the frightened Lucy from such a scene of tumult and wild license, as to call a blush to her cheek throughout her whole life, when she remembered that she had insisted upon going, and that Mr. Hampton found her there. She took to heart the few kind, but reproving words he addressed to her on their way home, and fortunately her ball-dress ministered to no more vanity, for a glance at it never failed to overwhelm her with shame, until it was remodeled into little frocks for her sisters.

Mr. Hampton called to thank Miss Clare for her womanly interest in Lucy, and in speaking of his plans for this family and others, found a judicious, though not obtrusive adviser.

I need not trouble myself to note the result of such an acquaintance as now sprung up between Miss Clare and Mr. Hampton, for every reader's imagination will suggest it. I cannot yet say "they were married and lived happily all their days," as so short a time has elapsed since the ball, but I can prophecy as much.

As for Emily, it cost her but little to give up Mr. Hampton. She said to her mother, that from the night she saw him at the ball in those shocking clothes, she felt there was something ungentlemanly and coarse about him!